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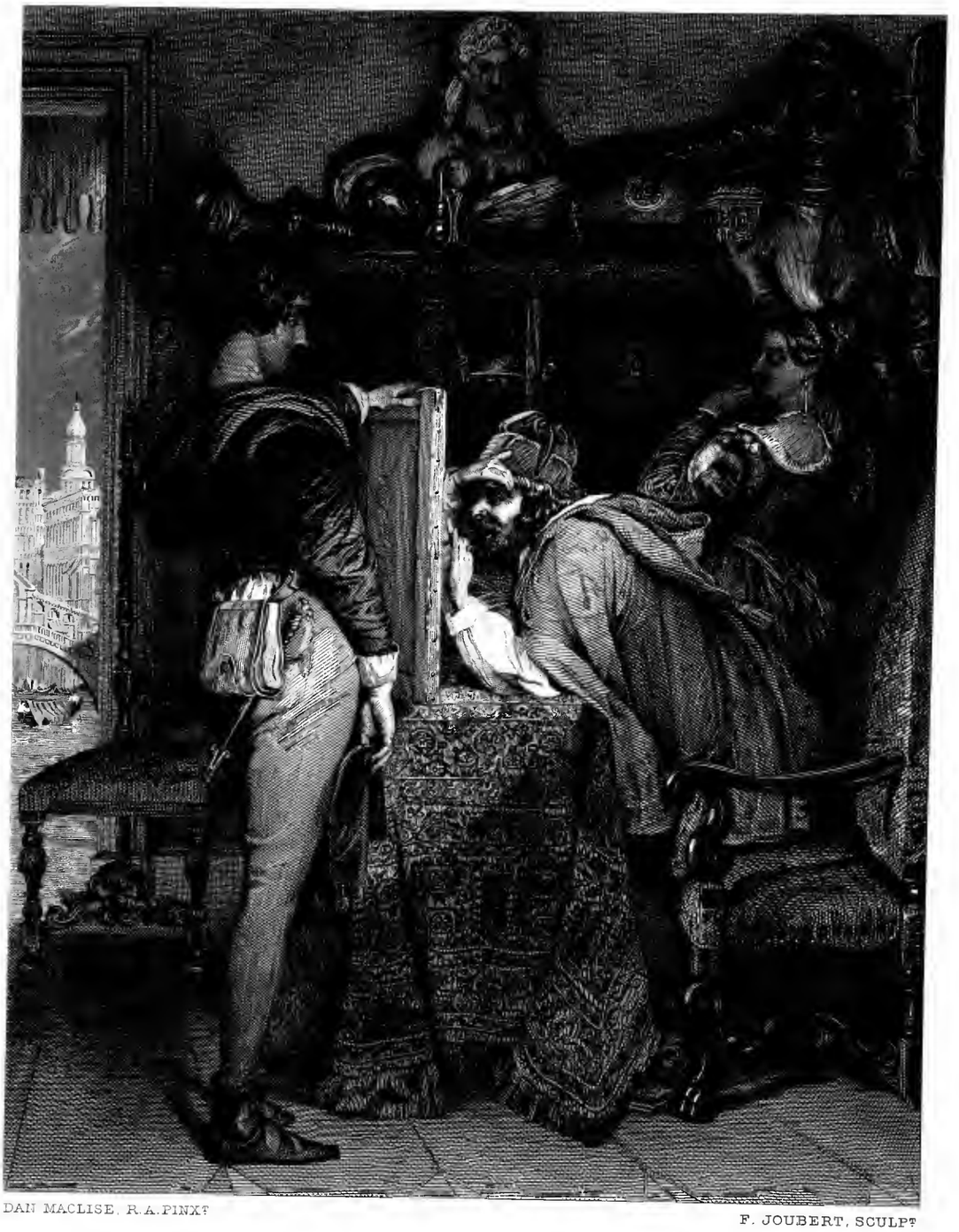

DAN MACLISE, R.A. PINXT

F. JOUBERT, SCULPT

SALVATOR.

LONDON, VIRTUE & Co

PICTURES

BY

DANIEL MACLISE, R.A.

WITH DESCRIPTIONS

AND

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE PAINTER

BY

JAMES DAFFORNE

LONDON
VIRTUE, SPALDING, AND DALDY
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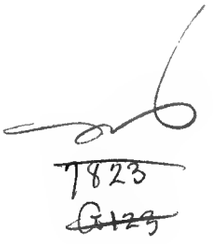

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LIST OF ENGRAVINGS.

DANIEL MACLISE, R.A.

THERE are few European countries in which painting has reached any eminence where the department of history, or historical subjects, has been less in demand than in England. Until the Royal Commissioners for erecting the Houses of Parliament had determined to decorate the edifice with works of this class, or of one somewhat analogous to it, historical painting owed nothing to State patronage, and what it now owes is little enough. In the earlier annals of the British School, whatever success this branch of Art achieved was mainly due to private enterprise and liberality. Boydell, the publisher, did more for it, in his *Shakspere Gallery*, than any Government this country has seen till within the last thirty years. But it never has been thus in foreign lands where painting has flourished: Italy and France, Spain, and the Low Countries (as Holland and Belgium were called), are filled with pictures commissioned either by the chief Government of the respective countries or by the local authorities; and their public halls and galleries bear witness to the genius of their artists and to the liberal patronage bestowed on them, not alone in years that are long past, but in our own time. And why should it not be the same with us? Parliament every year votes a sum of money for the purchase of pictures by the old masters of renown, to add to the National Gallery, and it is right to do so; but why should not also a vote be asked for to encourage native talent, and commissions given to our own painters for historical and other pictures? These should be placed in a separate room of the National Gallery—one dedicated to British Art.

Then, too, looking beyond the metropolis to the cities and chief towns of the provinces. There is scarcely one of these which is not associated with some important event in the history of the country; and as most of them, if not all, possess a town-hall of more or less pretension, it would be a wise and worthy act on the part of the municipal authorities to decorate their building with pictures of subjects interesting

to the inhabitants, because connected with the place in which their lot is cast. In these and in a variety of other ways an impetus would be given to the highest branch of Art which would do honour to the country and stimulate the genius of its painters.

These remarks are not made with any special reference to the artist whose life and works I am about to bring under notice. He was not an historical painter, properly so termed; but he possessed those qualities which, if called into action and encouraged, would have rendered him a great one. His powers and his style of working were eminently fitted for large canvases, and stirring incidents which constitute the leading points of the annals of a nation. His pictures which have any tendency towards historical compositions are full evidence of this.

Ireland claims Daniel Maclise as one of her gifted sons, and justly so, as far as birth is concerned; for he was born at Cork on the 25th of January, 1811. It has been stated by some writers in the local Irish papers that this event occurred in 1806; but Maclise himself always affirmed that he was born in the former year. Yet, though Cork was his native place, he came of Scotch descent; his grandfather, Daniel Macleish—so he wrote his name—being a true Highlander, and one of three brothers, mill-owners, living near Callender, in Perthshire. He joined the famous "Highland Watch," afterwards the 42nd Regiment, with which he served in Flanders, and was wounded at the battle of Fontenoy, in 1745, when the Duke of Cumberland was defeated, with considerable loss, by the French under Marshal Saxe. Macleish's two brothers were at the same time serving at home, having mounted the white cockade of Prince Charley, the "Young Pretender." Macleish's son, also Scottish born, joined the Elgin Fencibles, and went into Ireland with his regiment. While quartered in Cork he married a lady of the name of Clear, whose family were eminent merchants in that city, and, retiring from the army, entered into business—one, moreover, which was altogether new to him: the consequences, as might rationally be expected, were that the speculation turned out unsuccessful. From the union with Miss Clear sprang four sons and two daughters: among the former was Daniel Maclise.

From an excellent biographical sketch* written by an intimate friend of Maclise, I am able to give more details of the painter's early life than without it I should have had it in my power to do. The book will often be referred to in this brief notice of the artist and his works, for it contains much interesting material.

When quite a young boy Maclise was placed in one of the best schools in Cork; but as it was necessary, from the altered circumstances of his family, that he should, even at the comparatively early age of fourteen, endeavour to do something towards his own support, he was removed from school, and entered the banking-house of

* "A Memoir of Daniel Maclise, R.A." By W. Justin O'Driscoll, M.R.I.A. Published by Longmans and Co.

Messrs. Newenham, where, however, he did not remain long. A love of Art had already shown itself so unmistakably that he was permitted to attend the Cork School of Art, where he made rapid progress as a student, exhibiting a power of drawing and an aptitude for the acquisition of every kind of artistic knowledge beyond all his compeers. Among other gentlemen who took special interest in the progress of the young student was the late Mr. Sainthill, a learned antiquarian and a great lover of the fine arts. He saw that the drawings executed by Maclise bore certain evidence of genius, and he became his warm friend and wise counsellor, giving him free access to a library well stored with books of many kinds, and especially with works on antiquarian and legendary subjects. As a youth Maclise showed a love of literature, had read carefully the writings of many of the best English authors, and was not deficient in classical attainments: all this tended to educate his intellect, while it enriched his mind with a vast fund of information, of which he made profitable use in future years. He also attended the school of anatomy conducted by Dr. Woodrooffe in Cork, and occasionally dissected, thereby acquiring a knowledge of the structure of the human frame, and laying the foundation for that accuracy of drawing the figure which is one of the great charms of his pictures.

The next step in the early life of Maclise, with reference to his art, is very similar to that I related with regard to Leslie, when writing of him in a preceding volume. He first attracted notice by stealthily making a sketch of Cooke, the actor, when in Philadelphia; and Maclise adopted the same surreptitious course to get a portrait of Sir Walter Scott. The incident is thus related by Mr. O'Driscoll:—

"In the autumn of 1825 Sir Walter Scott made a hasty tour of Ireland, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart and Miss Edgeworth. Amongst other places he stayed a short time at Cork, and, whilst there, he visited the establishment of Mr. Bolster, an eminent bookseller. The presence of the illustrious author attracted crowds of literary persons there. Maclise, then a mere boy, conceived the idea of making a sketch of Sir Walter; and having placed himself unobserved in a part of the shop which afforded him an admirable opportunity, he made in a few minutes three outline sketches, each in a different position. He brought them home, and having selected the one he considered the best, worked at it all night, and next morning brought to Bolster a highly-finished pen-and-ink drawing, handled with all the elaborate minuteness of a line engraving. Bolster placed it in a conspicuous part of his shop, and Sir Walter with his friends having again called during the day, it attracted his attention when he entered. He was struck with the exquisite finish and fidelity of the drawing, and at once inquired the name of the artist who had executed it. Maclise, who was standing in a remote part of the shop, was brought forward and introduced to Sir Walter. The great author took him kindly by the hand, and expressed his astonishment that a mere boy could have achieved such a work, and predicted that he would yet distinguish himself. Sir Walter then asked for a pen, and wrote 'Walter Scott' at the foot of the sketch. Maclise was advised by Bolster to have it lithographed. That branch of Art was only then in its infancy. There was no lithographic press in Cork, and only *one* in Dublin. Maclise himself prepared the

tracings for transferring the drawing to the slate.* Five hundred copies were struck off, and were sold as rapidly as they were printed."

The marked success of this venture on the part of the boy-artist induced him, at the instigation of his friends, to open a studio for portraiture; and he soon got into full practice. His price for a portrait, in pencil, was a guinea and a half. His biographer speaks in glowing words of Maclise's popularity in his profession at this time. "As his marvellous skill of hand became every day more extensively known and conspicuous, men of genius, wealth, and eminence were to be found in his *atelier* sitting for their portraits, or glancing over the last creations of his magical pencil. Drawing was then the business of his life. His enthusiasm for Art subdued every other thought, and yet he contrived to steal moments from the easel which were appropriated to lighter pursuits—music and athletic exercises. * * * He was then a singularly fine and muscular lad, and rather famous for feats of agility and strength. Many of his leisure moments were passed on board the yacht of his friend J. L.; and as the little craft, wafted by the evening breeze, glided down the river Lee, Maclise might be seen sitting in the stern, with pencil in hand, transferring to his portfolio sketches of the charming scenery with which the banks of that beautiful river so abound."

Apropos of these sailing excursions, an anecdote is told by Mr. O'Driscoll too good to be omitted here:—

"An egregious coxcomb, named R., was the owner of a yacht called the *Gazelle*. He was extremely vain of her graceful build and her sailing qualities. She was moving down the river one evening, with her owner at the helm, and in all the pride of a new coat of paint for the regatta which was to take place next day. Maclise was steering a friend's yacht, and by some accident the boats came into contact. Mr. R. became exceedingly rude and uncivil. He insisted that the accident was caused by the steering of Maclise, who, he said, 'knew no more about a paint-brush than a rudder.' Maclise resolved to make reprisal in an appropriate way. Accompanied by ——, he proceeded at night in his friend's punt, armed with two pots of paint and brushes, to the part of the river where the gay *Gazelle* lay at her moorings. He got under the stern, and having deliberately painted it over with a coat of white, obliterating the name *Gazelle*, he drew on the stern the figure of a tortoise in black paint, placing under it the words, 'Le Noir Fainéant.' Mr. R., wholly unconscious of what had taken place, got his yacht under weigh next morning, and sailed down the river, her white canvas set and a gaudy pennant flying from her masthead. When he arrived amongst the other boats, the ludicrous figure on her stern attracted the notice of every one, and excited great merriment. At length Mr. R. discovered what had occurred; great and stormy was his indignation, and he uttered threats of vengeance on the person who disfigured his boat. Maclise, who was in his friend's yacht beside the *Gazelle*, said to Mr. R., 'I hope you are now convinced that I can use the paint-brush.' Mr. R. thought he had been made sufficiently ridiculous, and there the matter ended."

* Query—*stone*.—[Ed.]

But new labours and new scenes were soon to present themselves to the young artist. He was now fifteen years of age, and was receiving five guineas for his three-quarter-length portraits, and had his hands full of commissions at that price; and yet success, almost unheard of in a boy fifteen years of age, only seemed to stimulate his ambition for greater things: at present it did not go beyond the desire of studying in the schools of the Royal Academy. As a necessary preliminary step to attain this end, he devoted much time to the execution of an elaborate drawing, to be submitted to the Council of the Academy as a test of qualification for studentship. It was accepted; and in July, 1827, Maclise arrived in London from Cork, furnished with letters of introduction from his friend Mr. Sainthill to Crofton Croker, Leslie, and several others well known in literary and artistic circles. Mr. S. C. Hall had made the lad's acquaintance in Cork, at the School of Art. Crofton Croker exerted himself greatly to make the talents of the young artist known among those who had influence enough to help him onwards; and at his own house, at that of Mr. Hall, and also at Jerdan's, who then edited the *Literary Gazette*, Maclise met with many whose good opinion encouraged him and helped him onwards.

At the commencement of the session of the Academy, in the autumn of the year of his arrival in London, he began his labours in the schools; but his pecuniary means were limited, and he was far too independent to accept assistance from those who would gladly have given it. He was not, however, disposed to resort again to portraiture—of the kind, at least, he practised at Cork. Yet a chance incident led him to have recourse to it once more for a time. On the night of the first appearance of the younger Kean on the stage—at Drury Lane, in the character of Norval, on October 1, 1827—Maclise was present in the pit, and seized the opportunity of making a sketch of the juvenile actor in one of his most impressive scenes: a finished drawing was immediately produced from it, which Mr. Croker caused to be lithographed and published. The print had such an extensive sale as to put a considerable sum into the pocket of the artist. But this was not the only result. The portrait was so much admired as a work of art that it brought to Maclise numerous commissions of a like nature; and he soon began to be favourably known as a rising artist—in a special department, the only one he had hitherto tried.

On his arrival in London he took lodgings at the house of a carver and gilder, in Newman Street, Oxford Street, at that time the locality in which artists were accustomed to congregate. I merely mention this comparatively insignificant circumstance to introduce a story related by Mr. O'Driscoll:—

"The owner of the house, with a taste peculiar to his trade, had inserted plates of looking-glass in the back of the drawing-room door, and all the panels of the window-shutters. However, as the glare and glitter disturbed Maclise"—the room was his studio—"and distracted the attention of those who sat for their portraits, he devoted some of his leisure

hours to adorning all the panels with beautiful drawings in burnt Sienna, which had a charming effect. When he was leaving his lodgings, this Vandal (the landlord) claimed compensation in damages for the desecration of his door and windows, not calculating that the period might arrive when these panels, like the doors which inclose the altar-pieces in the Belgian Crypt (and which the artists, as a part of their contract, painted gratuitously), would become of great value: he would have tried to enforce his claim if a friend of Maclise had not expressed a determination to take the offending panels bodily out, and insert new looking-glass instead. Many years after this, and when the artist had reached the zenith of his fame, Newman Street was searched for the dwelling of the carver and gilder, but he had long 'shuffled off his mortal coil,' and the painted panels had disappeared."

Maclise's course in the Academy's schools was a series of triumphs. First, he gained the medal for the best drawing from the antique; then, the medal for the best copy of a painting by Guido; and finally, in 1829, he won the gold medal, the highest prize the Academy has to offer to students, for the best historical painting: the subject proposed by the Council being "The Choice of Hercules." This last and crowning success, as might naturally be assumed, quite elated the young painter; and in a characteristic letter to a friend, Dr. MacEvers, then a medical student, whose acquaintance he had made in London, he refers to the evening when the distribution of prizes took place. Lawrence was at that time President of the Academy, but Shee appears to have acted as his *locum tenens* on the occasion. Maclise thus describes the gathering:—

"On Saturday night Sir Martin Archer Shee took his chair, and there were present an overwhelming number, more than on any other previous occasion, for Sir Thomas Lawrence made it a private concern;* the Duke of Sussex, Lord Brougham, the Bishops of London and Llandaff, and all the noble and distinguished patrons and lovers of art, artists, members, associates, and students. Well, as I was saying, he took his chair, and began to address the successful candidate; but who *that* was, or for whom the eulogy he poured forth was intended, was a matter of the most anxious doubt to the *trembling seven* that sat on the seat before him. Never was a full quarter of an hour's praise felt to be more momentous; for my part, I don't recollect one word *but my own name, which completed it.* Heretofore they have been more merciful, and have immediately made the announcement, and taken time for the display of their eloquence in commendation afterwards. I, however, do not affect to forget certain piquant words he used: *e.g.*, 'fancy, taste, originality, industry, having taken the highest honour in the University of Art,' &c."

It would, perhaps, surprise those who have given no thought to the matter to find how few, comparatively, of those who succeed in gaining honours in the schools of the Academy ever rise to be men of mark in the profession; some, in fact, are rarely heard of afterwards. It seems as if they had reached the extreme limit of their powers within the walls of the institution; had shown that the *curriculum* of studentship

* This remark is scarcely intelligible.—[ED.]

sufficed to exhaust all their talents; and that then they had become absorbed into the great mass of artists who can only be designated as mediocrities, if not something lower. But this was not the case with Maclise.

The award of the gold medal of the Academy confers on its possessor the privilege of studying three years on the Continent at the expense of that institution; at least, a sufficiently adequate sum for the purpose is allowed. Maclise, however, with that spirit of independence which animated him through life, refused to avail himself of the advantage he had gained, and was determined that whatever success he achieved should be the result of his own unaided efforts. He subsequently visited Paris and other foreign cities, but whatever he saw in no way affected his own style.

In 1829, the year in which he received the gold medal, he made his first appearance in the exhibition-rooms of the Academy, by sending his "Malvolio affecting the Count," from Shakspere's *Twelfth Night*. The scene lies in Olivia's garden, where Malvolio "has been yonder i' the sun, practising behaviour to his own shadow, this half-hour." The subject was a bold one for a young artist to undertake, but his treatment of it gained him great credit. In the following year he contributed seven pictures to the Academy-exhibition, the majority consisting of small-sized portraits of the Princess Sophia, Mrs. S. C. Hall, L. E. L. (Miss Landon), and the poet Campbell; the remaining three bore the respective titles of "The Trysting-Place," "A First Sitting," and "Isabella's Favourite." In the summer of that year (1830) he set out with a friend for Paris, whence, after staying a few days, they started with the intention of visiting Spain, to see the works of the great masters of that country. They set out to make the journey on foot; but when the travellers were nearing the Pyrenees Maclise was attacked with illness, and both were obliged to return home. The indisposition soon passed away, and he was again at work preparing for the following year's display at the Academy, where he exhibited several small portraits, the most conspicuous being that of Lord Castlereagh; and one ideal composition, "The Sleeping Page." In 1832 he also exhibited some portraits of small size, with a picture of considerable dimensions — the most ambitious subject the artist had hitherto attempted—"Puck disenchanting Bottom; Oberon and Titania reconciled; Messrs. Peach-blossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed bringing Gifts." I chanced to get a glimpse, but scarcely more, of this picture in the rooms of Messrs. Christie and Co., in 1871, at the sale of some pictures belonging to Messrs. Agnew and Co., of Manchester, when it was disposed of for £162; a sum that appeared to me far below its value.

Maclise made a vast stride in popular favour—became, in fact, an artist of mark—by the picture he exhibited at the Academy in 1833. Mr. O'Driscoll, in his "Memoir," gives its history. In the autumn of the preceding year Maclise paid a visit to his native city: it was the first time of his going there since he left it five

years before to seek his fortune in London. At the period of his visit, says his biographer, "there lived in the village of Blarney (a very few miles from Cork) the Rev. Matthew Horgan; he was the parish priest, a genial old gentleman, famous for his antiquarian research and his profound acquaintance with the literature of Ireland;

'A man he was to all the country dear,'—

the arbiter to whom all disputes and differences that sprang up in the parish were invariably referred; in fact, he claimed to possess a kind of feudal jurisdiction over his tractable parishioners, and 'he had his claim allowed.' It was the invariable custom of the good old priest to invite a large party on 'All-Hallow Eve:' it was a social gathering, where persons of superior position in society were to be found unaffectedly mingling with the poorest peasantry of the parish. Crofton Croker and Maclise were invited to this entertainment; and while the young artist, charmed with the novelty of the scene, surrendered himself heart and soul to the enjoyments of the night, and joined in the harmless hilarity that prevailed, he contrived to sketch every group in the 'Barn.'" Such was the origin of Maclise's "Snap-Apple Night, or All-Hallow Eve, in Ireland," which, having been engraved, on a scale of commensurate size, many years ago, has long become widely known. The picture was the largest in oils the artist had ever undertaken; and the originality of the subject, combined with its interest, attracted every visitor to the gallery of the Academy. Some lines of an old ballad were appended, as a kind of motto, to the title of the subject:—

"There Peggy was dancing with Dan,
While Maureen the lead was melting,
To prove how her fortunes ran,
With cards that old Nancy dealt in.

"There was Kate and her sweetheart Will,
In nuts their true loves burning,
And poor Norah, though smiling still,
She'd miss'd the snap-apple turning."

Mr. O'Driscoll says the principal characters in the composition are portraits; the artist having introduced those of Sir Walter Scott, Crofton Croker, his own sisters, Perceval Banks (who married Anne, his younger sister), and the old parish priest; the last appearing in the background, "compelling two of his 'boys,' who had been trying their shillelahs on each other's heads, to shake hands and be friends."

Two pictures Maclise exhibited at the British Institution early in the same year (1833) were much admired: these were "A Love-Adventure of Francis I. with Diana of Poictiers," and "Mokanna unveiling his Features to Zelica," taken from Moore's "Lalla Rookh."

Though much occupied in painting portraits at this period of his career, he found opportunity to execute another large picture of Irish character, "The Installation of Captain Rock," exhibited at the Academy in 1834. It represents a scene in "Tipperary Tales:"—"Amid the tears and lamentations of women, Delaney advanced to a tomb on which the murdered man was laid; and, placing his right hand upon the body, swore to revenge his death. Ere his solemn vow was thrice repeated, a hunch-back mendicant had elevated himself upon the shoulders of one of the heterogeneous assemblage; and, with the old military cap worn by the former leader of the faction, crowned Delaney as 'Captain Rock,' muttering, 'Upon this Rock I will build my church;' while the Buccough, unbuckling his wooden leg, flourished it with a deep shout that for a moment stilled the groups which had collected within the ruins of the abbey, and, to use the words of Cowper, were agitated like

'The workings of a sea
Before a calm that rocks itself to rest.'"

Were this picture the work of a veteran artist it could not fail to add to his laurels; as the production of a painter who had scarcely reached his twenty-third year, it may be considered a really marvellous production, for the power it shows as a composition and the expression thrown into the characters. The "Installation" takes place at midnight, among the ruins of an old abbey: in the foreground is the corpse of the dead man lying on a tomb; the body is bared from the waist upwards, and standing by its side is the newly-elected chief, to whom a member of the brotherhood administers the oath. "The felicitous arrangement of the several groups, the drinking-party, the village orator, the excited crowd around the tomb, the stately ruins of the old abbey, the skilful disposition of light and shade, the moonbeams struggling through the groined arches and carved mullions, falling on the pallid features of the dead man," are each and all points which form a combination most striking and dramatic. The picture, Mr. O'Driscoll says, is in the possession of Mr. Hawker, of Birmingham.

It shows the versatility of Maclise's genius, and also the varied sources to which he would turn for subject-matter, when we find such a contrast to the latter picture in "The Chivalric Vow of the Ladies and the Peacock," exhibited at the Academy in 1835. A gorgeous scene of early mediæval times is this composition, rich in design and gorgeous in colour. The subject is taken from the "Histoire de Chevalerie:"—"Between the courses of the repast two damsels entered the hall, advancing to the sound of solemn minstrelsy, and bearing the peacock roasted in its feathers, in a golden dish, to each knight in succession, who made his vow, and sanctioned his resolution by appealing to God and the Virgin Mary, the ladies and the peacock. The dish was then placed on the table, and the lord of the festival deputed some renowned knight to carve it in such a manner that each might partake." One

has only to know the exuberance of Maclise's imagination to form some appreciative idea of the manner in which he would deal with a theme so suggestive of pictorial splendour as this. At the close of the year he had reached the first step in honours by being elected Associate of the Royal Academy, at the early age of twenty-five.

Looking through my catalogue of the Royal Academy exhibition of 1836, I find marks of commendation against his two pictures then hanging in the Gallery: one, "Macbeth and the Weird Sisters"*—the heath-scene in the drama—Mr. Macready represented as Macbeth; the other, "An Interview between Charles I. and Oliver Cromwell," illustrating one of the meetings which took place after the surrender of the King, by the Scotch, to the English Commissioners. The persons represented in this picture are Charles, the young Duke of York, and the Princess Elizabeth—the only members of the Royal Family then left in England—Cromwell, Ireton, Fairfax, and several officers.

In 1837 he sent seven pictures to the Academy, of which three were portraits; the others were "A Lady at a Casement," "A Lady at her Embroidery"—probably both portraits also—"The Conversazione," and "Bohemian Gipsies." This last I have always considered Maclise's finest work, as a "gallery-picture:" grand in design, masterly in grouping, rich and harmonious in colour; a composition, in fact, reminding me of Nicholas Poussin, so antique is the feeling (if such an expression is admissible) it shows. I have had several opportunities of examining this noble picture since it was first exhibited, and, while fully appreciating all that Maclise subsequently produced, I should yet point to his "Bohemian Gipsies" as possessing qualities which no other of his works can claim. At the sale, in 1860, of the collection of the late Mr. Wells, of Redleaf, this picture was bought in—by his executor, it was said—for the sum of 1,030 guineas. It afterwards got into the hands of Messrs. Agnew, of Manchester; and, on the death of the eldest member of that firm, was sold, in 1871, for £420 only: a striking instance of the fickleness of public taste, or judgment, in matters of Art.

"Salvator Rosa painting his Friend Masaniello" is one of five pictures hung in the Academy in 1838; but I am unable to recall it to mind. Another was "Olivia and Sophia fitting out Moses for the Fair," from the "Vicar of Wakefield:"—

"The next morning I perceived his sisters mighty busy in fitting out Moses for the fair; trimming his hair, brushing his buckles, and cocking his hat with pins.

"With a deal box before him, to bring home groceries in, he had on a coat made of that cloth they call 'thunder and lightning,' which, grown too short, was much too good to be thrown away. His waistcoat was gosling green, and his sisters had tied his hair with a broad black ribband."

A clever picture, undoubtedly; but cold in colour, and rather "chalky." The

* This picture was in the recent exhibition of the Birmingham Society of Artists, when it was marked to be sold at the price of 800 guineas. The owner's name was not given.—[ED.]

girls, too, are over-dressed; yet the Vicar's two boys are admirably placed on the canvas, while all the accessories are rendered perfectly: but the composition, as a whole, seems to require bringing together and harmonising. A third picture, and by far the most important of the year's productions, was "Merry Christmas in the Baron's Hall," of which the following description appeared, under the title, in the catalogue:—

"Descending the staircase, towards the centre of the picture, the ceremony of bringing in the boar's head is represented after the best antiquarian authorities. 'A fair and large boar's head was served in upon a silver platter with minstrelsye, crowned with bays and sweet rosemary,' borne by a serving-man with green scarf, chosen for his height and lustiness; preceded by the master of the revels, or Lord of Misrule, chanting a carol in its praise, accompanied by 'two pages in tafatye sarcenets,' each with a 'mess of mustard, and followed by the woodman with his boar-spear, the huntsman with his drawn sabre, choristers, musicians, &c.' In the background, on the dais, are seated the baron, his kindred, and guests, watching the ceremonial; on the extreme left, by the hearth where the yule-log burns, an old woman tells, by cards, the fortunes of a girl who stands near her; part of the augury is just about to be fulfilled beneath the mistletoe-bough, which was not only openly suspended from the centre of the ceiling, but also lurked in concealed places by the hearth and over doorways. To the left, in the foreground, is a group of damsels and pages, in holiday dresses, hunting the slipper. The group on the right, in front, is chiefly composed of the Christmas mummers and masquers regaling: one of the principal is Father Christmas, with his false beard, dressed in fur, and crowned with holly; he is mingling the wassail in a bowl 'garnished with ribbons;' St. Distaff attends him with the roasted pippins peculiar to this beverage.

"Perhaps the old play of *St. George* is about to be enacted, for that hero and the dragon are seated together. There is also the Turk and other masquers for the game; and there, too, the hobby-horses, 'without whom it were not Christmasse.' All are regaling. On the extreme right are various figures, among whom a conjurer and his associates are conspicuous."

In this representation of a "merry Christmas," as it was kept by our forefathers some centuries ago, the artist has contrived to introduce about one hundred figures, each of whom is a study of costume and character; and the several groups are studies equally valuable for arrangement and general effect; while the management of light and shade is as skilful as it is forcible in its results. At the sale, in 1856, of the collection of Mr. Birch, of Birmingham, the "Baron's Hall" was bought in at the price of 1,000 guineas.

Following the course of Maclise's appearance in the galleries of the Royal Academy, we find him exhibiting, in 1839, four pictures, of which one was a portrait. A second was "A Scene from the Burletta of *Midas*," of which an engraving is here given. Such a singular combination of fact and fiction is to be found in this picture as to render a rather lengthened description necessary to understand its meaning. Had the figure with a guitar been habited as some modern strolling player or musician, the composition would have been perfectly intelligible; but in his semi-classic costume, however harmonious may be the music he produces from his instrument, he

himself is certainly not in harmony with his audience, nor with the place in which all are assembled.

The author of the amusing but not most refined play, *Midas*, was K. O'Hara. It was written and first performed in Dublin, more than a century ago; was introduced at Covent Garden Theatre two or three years afterwards; and, I think, was produced at the Haymarket Theatre about sixteen or seventeen years since. The characters who appear in the scene presented in the picture are Sileno, an old farmer, in whose house they now are; Mysis, his wife; their two daughters; and Apollo, in the guise of a shepherd. The last, having offered some offence to Jupiter, is cast down from Elysium, and descends on the farm belonging to Sileno. A shepherd, seeing him fall, runs off alarmed, leaving behind him his coat, hat, and guitar, which the banished culprit picks up, and appropriates to his own use. In this condition he is encountered by the old farmer, who immediately enlists him into his service, and to divert his wife and daughters with his instrument; telling him—

"You can help to bring home harvest,
Tend the sheep, and feed the hogs;
* * * *
Come, strike hands, you'll live in clover,
When we get you once at home;
And, when daily labour's over,
We'll all dance to your strum-strum."

Apollo is accordingly brought to the farmer's house, and is introduced to his wife and daughters:—

"Now, dame and girls, no more let's hear you grumble
At too hard toil: I chanced just now to stumble
On this stout drudge, and hired him, fit to labour."

The old lady regards the musician with anger and contempt, and rails at her husband for what he has done:—

"Fine rubbish to bring home! a strolling thummer,
What art thou good for? speak, thou ragged mummer!"

The girls, anticipating, no doubt, much amusement from his musical attainments, and pleased with the stranger's good looks, "so modest, so genteel," offer him as kindly a welcome as bright, smiling, and coquettish faces can present. Apollo, to soften the wrath of Mysis, touches his guitar, and begins to sing a song, which, with the play-going public of her time, is always identified with Madame Vestris, when she appeared in the part of Apollo, one of her most successful characters:—

"Pray, goody, please to moderate the rancour of your tongue;
Why flash those sparks of fury from your eyes?" &c.

A SCENE FROM "MIDAS".

The *dramatis personæ* in the scene are well sustained throughout: the boldness and assurance, not unmixed with vexation, of the young Apollo; the cynical contempt expressed in the looks and gesture of the farmer's wife; the remonstrating action of her husband; and the arch coquetry of the buxom daughters, are all admirably rendered. The work is painted with the utmost attention to detail and finish in all its parts, and has less of the hard, dry manner visible in many of Maclise's paintings; the colouring, however, is more subdued than usual, yet sufficiently brilliant to produce richness of effect. It was purchased by the Queen from the Academy, and now hangs at Osborne House.

But the picture which arrested most attention—it was, indeed, one of the great features of the Academy's exhibition that year—was "Robin Hood," the simple title given to it, though an elaborate composition containing a large number of figures. The scene will be best described by the quotation that appeared in the catalogue:—

"Robin Hood and his merry men entertain Richard Cœur de Lion in Sherwood Forest. Robin is represented according to the old ballads—

'Yclad in Scarlette Redde,
His men in Lyncolne Grene,'

drinking a 'Healthe unto the Kynge,' whom as yet he does not know,—

'The Kynge himself drank to the Kynge,
And round about it went.'

On the left is Littlejohn, who was seven feet high, bringing in 'two pryme fallowe bucke;' Will Scarlett is next to him, and Fryar Tuck. The minstrel Allan-a-Dale accompanies him, while George-a-Greene, Much, the miller's son, and others of the 'merrye men' are reclining around. Maid Marian sits in her bower close to the trysting-tree. Behind the King are two of his Eastern attendants, as he is new from the Holy War."

As a composition bold and original in design, and vigorous in execution, this work must occupy a high position: it shows prodigality of talent, but it lacks concentration of effect. Each figure taken separately is admirable in itself, and where they are seen in groups they come well together; but, casting the eye over the whole canvas, the entire composition is too much broken up into parts, and undue prominence is given to what should be subordinate—a heap of gold and silver utensils. The artist appears to have revelled in the individualities of his subject, and, engrossed by them, forgot that unity which is essential to render a picture effective as a whole. It was in the gallery of the late Lord Northwick. When his lordship's large and varied collection was sold, in 1859, after his decease, "Robin Hood" was bought by Mr. Eckford for the sum of 1,305 guineas. In 1867 it was sold in the rooms of Messrs. Christie, Manson, and Woods for 480 guineas; and two years later, in the same rooms, for 360 guineas.

There is yet another work exhibited in 1839 that must not be passed over, "The

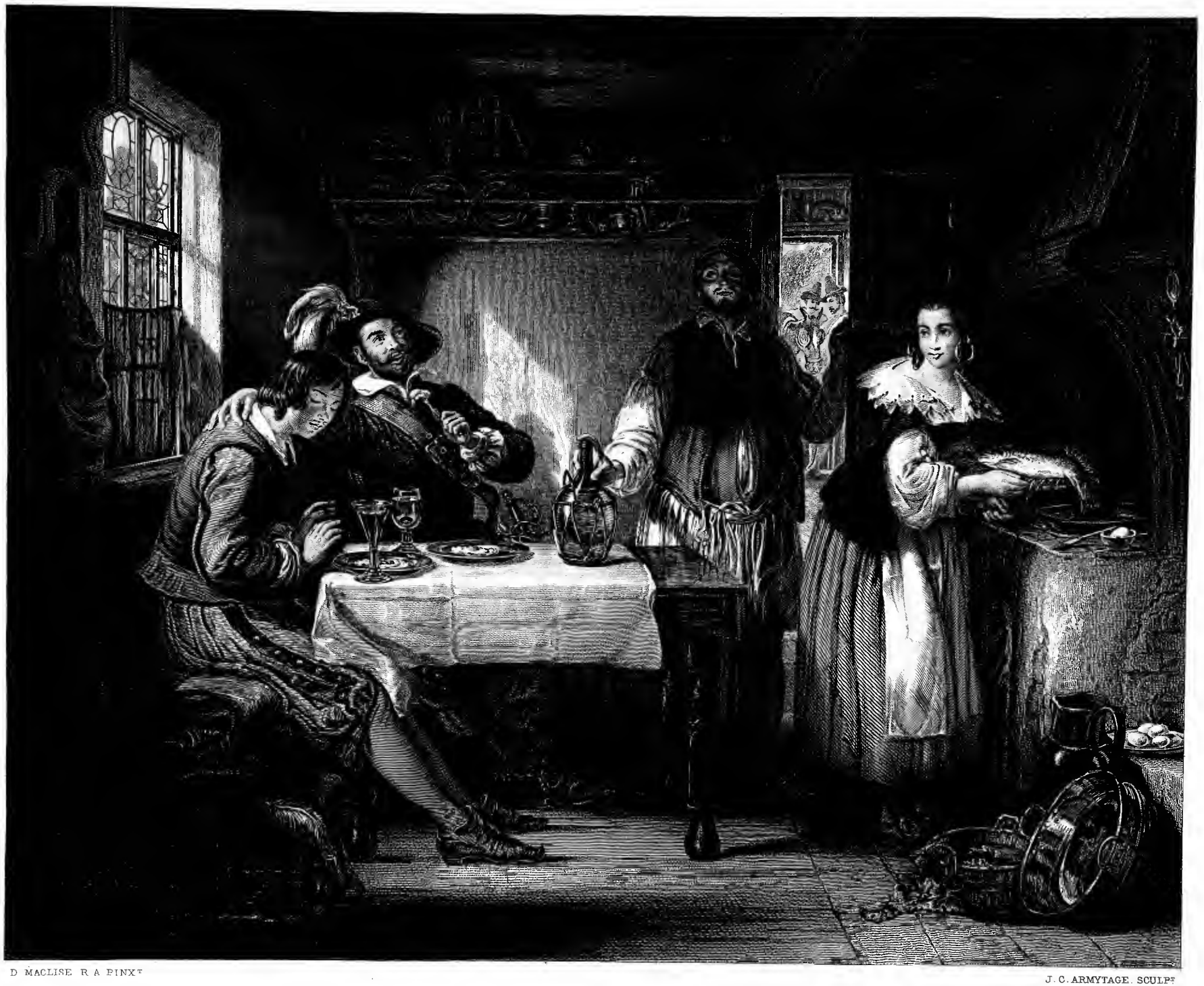
Second Adventure of Gil Blas," or, as it is called in the annexed engraving, "Gil Blas at Pennaflor." With some of our artists Le Sage's humorous fiction yields in popularity only to Goldsmith's graver story of the "Vicar of Wakefield"—both of which have proved almost inexhaustible sources of subject-matter; and one can scarcely feel surprised that they should be so frequently applied to, for Goldsmith's tale abounds with amusing and affecting incident, and the history of Gil Blas contains many faithful portraits of human nature. Few books have been so often quoted as the latter, "as affording happy illustrations of general manners, and of the common caprices and infirmities incident to man."

The lesson taught in the narrative that supplied Maclise for this picture is a warning against flattery. Gil Blas, on the first evening after his departure from Oviedo for Salamanca, reaches Pennaflor, and seeks a night's lodging at some hostelry:—

"When I arrived at the inn I called for supper, and, it being a meagre day, was fain to put up with eggs; which, while they got ready, I made up to my landlady, whom I had not seen before; she appeared handsome enough, and withal so sprightly and gay, that I should have concluded, even if her husband had not told me so, that her house was pretty well frequented. When the omelet I had bespoke was ready, I sat down to table by myself; and had not yet swallowed the first morsel, when the landlord came in, followed by the man who had stopped him in the street. This cavalier, who wore a long sword, and seemed to be about thirty years of age, advanced towards me with an eager air, saying, 'Mr. Student, I am informed that you are that Signor Gil Blas of Santillane, who is the link of philosophy, and ornament of Oviedo. Is it possible that you are that mirror of learning, that sublime genius, whose reputation is so great in this country? You know not,' continued he, addressing himself to the innkeeper and his wife, 'you know not what you possess! You have a treasure in your house. Behold, in this young gentleman, the eighth wonder of the world!' Then, turning to me, and throwing his arms about my neck, 'Forgive,' cried he, 'my transports! I cannot contain the joy that your presence creates!'

"I could not answer for some time, because he locked me so close in his arms that I was almost suffocated for want of breath; and it was not till I had disengaged my head from his embrace that I replied, 'Signor Cavalier, I did not think my name was known at Pennaflor.' 'How! known,' resumed he, in his former strain; 'we keep a register of all the celebrated names within twenty leagues of us: you, in particular, are looked upon as a prodigy, and I don't at all doubt that Spain will one day be as proud of you as Greece was of her seven sons.' * * * My admirer appeared to me so much of a gentleman, that I invited him to take a share of my supper. 'Ah! with all my soul,' cried he; 'I am too much obliged to my kind stars for having thrown me in the way of the illustrious Gil Blas not to enjoy my good fortune as long as I can: I have no great appetite,' pursued he, 'but will sit down to bear you company, and eat a mouthful, purely out of complaisance.'

"So saying, my panegyrist took his place right over against me, and, a cover being laid for him, attacked the omelet as voraciously as if he had fasted three whole days. By his complaisant beginning I foresaw that our dish would not last long, and therefore ordered a second; which they dressed with such despatch that it was served just as we, or rather he, had made an end of the first. He proceeded on this with the same vigour, and found means,



D MACLISE R A PINXT

J. C. ARMYTAGE. SCULPT

GIL BLAS AT PENNAFLOR.

without losing one stroke of his teeth, to overwhelm me with praises during the whole repast, which made me very well pleased with my sweet self. He drank in proportion to his eating: sometimes to my health, sometimes to that of my father and mother, whose happiness in having such a son as me he could not enough admire. In the meantime, he plied me with wine, and insisted upon my doing him justice, while I toasted health for health—a circumstance which, together with his intoxicating flattery, put me into such good humour that, seeing our second omelet half-devoured, I asked the landlord if he had no fish in the house. Signor Corcuelo, who, in all likelihood, had a fellow-feeling with the parasite, replied, 'I have a delicate trout, but those who eat it must pay for the sauce; 'tis a bit too dainty for your palate, I doubt.' 'What do you call too dainty?' said the sycophant, raising his voice; 'you're a nuisance, indeed! Know that there is nothing too good for Signor Gil Blas de Santillane, who deserves to be entertained like a prince.'

"I was pleased at his laying hold of the landlord's last words, in which he prevented me, who, finding myself offended, said, with an air of disdain, 'Produce this trout of yours, Gaffer Corcuelo, and give yourself no trouble about the consequences.' This was what the innkeeper wanted: he got it ready, and served it up in a trice. At sight of this new dish I could perceive the parasite's eyes sparkle with joy; and he renewed that complaisance, I mean for the fish, which he had already shown for the eggs. At last, however, he was obliged to give over, being crammed to the throat. Having, therefore, eaten and drank to the full, he thought proper to conclude the farce by rising from the table, and accosting me in these words:—'Signor Gil Blas, I am too well satisfied with your good cheer to leave you without offering an important advice, which you seem to have great occasion for: henceforth, beware of praise, and be upon your guard against everybody you do not know. You may meet with other people inclined to divert themselves with your credulity, and perhaps to push things still farther; but don't be duped again, nor believe yourself (though they should swear it) the eighth wonder of the world.' So saying, he laughed in my face, and stalked away."

It would be impossible fully to appreciate Maclise's most humorous picture without a knowledge of the incident it illustrates. The story is told with admirable point: Gil Blas, even to his very attitude, is the embodiment of a silly dupe, "beguiled with enticing words;" the effrontery and easy bearing of the rogue who seasons each mouthful he takes with honeyed phrases addressed to his victim, and who seals them with an affectionate embrace at the sight of the dainty trout; the assumed independent look of the host, and the smiling face of his pretty wife, who is preparing to dress the fish, for which she knows she will be paid; the spectators of the operation of victimising, as they see what is going on through the open doorway—are respectively examples of well-studied character. All the details of the picture are carried out with minute exactness, while the light and shade are distributed in a way that brings the whole composition into effective harmony. The painting is in the possession of the Queen.

In the following year (1840) Maclise was elected to the full honours of the Royal Academy, when he exhibited in the gallery one of his finest works, "The Banquet Scene in *Macbeth*." All who have seen the tragedy well put on the stage will understand what material this especial incident of the drama affords to the artist for exciting

and powerful representation; and perhaps there has been no painter of our time so competent to deal with it. The half-barbaric splendour of the banquet-room, with its royal and noble occupants, even were there nothing to disturb the harmony of the feast, would in itself constitute a very attractive picture; but the peculiar circumstances that attend the gathering of the Scottish chieftains invest the scene with a most powerful interest. Macbeth discovers the ghost of Banquo seated in the chair he should fill; and the self-convicted murderer, horror-stricken at the sight, exclaims—

> "Thou canst not say, I did it; never shake
> Thy gory locks at me."

Lady Macbeth, alarmed at her husband's speech, and knowing to what it refers, tries vainly to quiet him, and addresses the guests, who have risen from their chairs in surprise and consternation:—

> "Sit, worthy friends. My lord is often thus,
> And hath been from his youth; pray you, keep seat;
> The fit is momentary: upon a thought
> He will again be well; if much you note him
> You shall offend him, and extend his passion;
> Feed, and regard him not.—Are you a man?"

The horror of Macbeth at beholding the apparition is depicted with amazing force; the muscles of the hands tell it no less than the features of the face. His wretched wife, tenfold more of an assassin than himself, stands up, with at least an affectation of bold assurance and innocence, to calm her guests, who number nearly seventy persons, all distinctly made out, and with every variety of countenance, expression, and attitude. The triumph of the picture, however, most spectators will consider to be the figure of the blood-stained Banquo, which is indicated rather than actually personified: the human form is there, darkly shadowed forth; obscure, but terrible from its ghastly indistinctness. The imagination had here full scope, and Art has never conveyed more truthfully the realities of an appalling scene. The accessories, too, have all been closely and authoritatively studied, from the jewelled crown of the usurper to the goblet of red wine flung, in the agony of the moment, upon the floor. This picture was painted expressly for the Earl of Chesterfield, who, on the application of the Royal Commissioners for the International Exhibition of 1862, allowed it to be sent to the gallery. Mr. O'Driscoll says it is now the property of Mr. Cozens, of Clapham Park. A small *replica* of it is in the possession of Mr. T. Williams, Elm Tree Road, St. John's Wood.

Another scene from "Gil Blas" was the subject of a second picture sent by Maclise to the Academy in 1840: it was called "Gil Blas dresses *en Cavalier*." Having arrived at Burgos, Gil Blas takes counsel with himself as to his future course

in life, and at length decides that he "will turn gentleman, and endeavour to make his fortune in the world." Being in the possession of a hundred ducats presented to him by Donna Mencia, a lady whom he had assisted to escape from the clutches of a gang of robbers, he sends one of the waiters at the inn where he stayed for a broker, or, in plain terms, a dealer in second-hand clothes. The man soon makes his appearance, followed by two apprentices, each carrying a large green bag on his shoulders:—

"He saluted me with great civility, saying, 'Signor Cavalier, you are very happy in having applied to me rather than to any other body. I don't choose to disparage my brethren; God forbid that I should prejudice their reputation in the least! but, between you and me, there is no conscience among them. They are all as unbounded as Jews: I am the only honest broker in town. I confine myself to a moderate profit, being satisfied with a pound in the shilling—I mean, a shilling in the pound. Thank Heaven! I deal upon the square with all mankind.'

"The broker, after this preamble, which I took for gospel, ordered his men to untie the bundles, and showed me suits of all colours. Some which were of plain cloth I rejected with disdain, as being too mean; but they made me try one that seemed to have been made exactly for my shape, and which struck my fancy, although somewhat worn. It consisted of a doublet with slashed sleeves, a pair of breeches, and a cloak, the whole of blue velvet embroidered with gold. Fixing on this, I cheapened it, and the broker, perceiving I was bent upon it, observed that I had an excellent taste. 'Odds bodkins!' cried he, 'one may see you know what you're about. I can tell you that suit was made for one of the greatest lords in the kingdom, who never had it three times on his back. Examine the velvet, nothing can be finer; and as for the embroidery, you must confess the work is exquisite.'"

The point of this picture is the selection of the dress, or rather the fitting it on the person of Gil Blas: the contrast between the bedizened youth and the broker's apprentices, one of whom holds up a looking-glass to the former to enable him to judge of his appearance in the suit of "blue velvet embroidered with gold," is capital. The whole composition is thoroughly humorous, without the least exaggeration.

There is yet another picture of the same date (1840), of which an engraving is introduced into this volume. The artist simply entitled it, "A Scene from *Twelfth Night*:" a somewhat similar subject has already been noticed as one of the very earliest of Maclise's works. Here the scene, as in the other, lies in the garden of Olivia, where she and her attendant, Maria, are waiting an interview with the lady's steward, Malvolio:—

"*Oliv.* Where is Malvolio?
Mar. He's coming, madam,
But in strange manner. He is sure possessed.
Oliv. Why, what's the matter? does he rave?
Mar. No, madam,
He does nothing but smile; your ladyship
Were best have guard about you, if he come;
For, sure, the man is tainted in his wits.

Oliv. Go, call him hither. I'm as mad as he,
If sad and merry madness equal be.
Enter MALVOLIO.
How now, Malvolio?
Mal. Sweet lady, ho, ho. (*Smiles fantastically.*)
Oliv. God comfort thee! why dost thou smile so,
And kiss thy hand so oft?"

Malvolio presents himself before his mistress in yellow stockings, cross-gartered—"a colour she abhors, and a fashion she detests." The vanity and self-sufficiency of the would-be suitor are unequivocally expressed in his ridiculous assumption of the airs and manners of the gentleman—an art he has long studied. Nor are the relative positions of the other characters, and the feeling by which each is respectively animated, less forcibly rendered—the half-angry, half-amused countenance of the lady; and the thorough enjoyment with which the maid contemplates a scene she has been mainly instrumental in getting up. The plot is undoubtedly working to her entire satisfaction: the deceit she has practised to induce Malvolio to play the cavalier is intended to have a double result—in curing his vanity, and in producing the more important *dénouement* of the drama.

In the summer of 1840 Maclise made a second journey to Paris, accompanied by his sisters. In a long letter addressed to his friend, Mr. John Forster, which appears in Mr. O'Driscoll's book, he gives his views of Parisian society and sights in a very characteristic manner:*—

"Put up at Hôtel Montmorency, Boulevard des Italiens, in the merriest part, and had *petits appartements fraîchement décorés et bien meublés*, of three rooms *en suite*, very much bemirrored, and crowded with sofas, and slippery with waxed floors; balconies looking over the heads of thousands sipping their *café* and *petit verre;* this *au troisième*, and yet expensive to me, fifteen francs a day; however, we made the most of the situation, for we were, with our elbows squared, at our windows whenever at home, and always amused by the throng beneath and opposite. Two days I hired a carriage and showed them all distant places, such as Bois de Boulogne, Longchamps, Champ de Mars, Invalides, and some of the outer boulevards, Gobelins, Père La Chaise, Jardin des Plantes; but generally we omnibussed it, and for a few *sous* each you can get any distance along and athwart the city. * * * I sketched at the Louvre—*not* the pictures, but some of the *artistes* at work; but one day an

* Mr. O'Driscoll has evidently committed an error in placing 1840 as the date of this communication. Maclise refers in it to a letter given to him by Mr. *Millais* to convey to a friend in Paris; but in that year Mr. Millais, who was born in 1829, could not have been more than eleven years of age; and could, therefore, scarcely have been even known to Maclise. Again, Mdlle. Rosa Bonheur, whose picture in the Luxembourg Gallery is spoken of, did not paint it till 1849: in 1840 she was but eighteen years old, and had scarcely made herself known in the Art-world. And yet, once more, Murillo's picture of the "Immaculate Conception," which must be the one to which allusion is made, did not come into the possession of the French Government till 1852. Yet, notwithstanding the chronological mistake made by Maclise's friend and biographer, I have followed the order in which he has placed the letter, simply because I am unable to determine its true date.—[ED.]

D. MACLISE. R.A. PAINTER.

R. STAINES. ENGRAVER.

MALVOLIO.

(TWELETH NIGHT.)

attendant, who had stood rather smiling at my performance, at length, but with great courtesy, told me it was '*défendu d'étudier d'après nature*,' which fully accounts (though deeply and sarcastically) for the state of Art-study here. There is a considerable forest of easels around the 'Murillo,' exaggerating its merits, which, to me, are of the insipid sort. I felt as if I had seen it from my cradle; with her little Spanish face and upturned eyes, and robe of pink and blue, and a garland of Cupids on clouds below. These are freshly painted, as if 'fed on roses.'* The classification now in the Long Gallery is admirable. You can limit yourself and walk straight to the department you want; from early Italian to the French time of Jouvenet; you have all the schools. With what real mortification one thinks of the dome of Trafalgar Square and its petty possessions! † There is a soul and a spirit ever evidenced by the numberless students and copyists that conveys the idea that Art is alive and stirring, and really liked by the people. It is the same at the Luxembourg; a most admirable *paysage* by Rosa Bonheur, a beautiful girl, that is the finest thing I ever saw—oxen ploughing in the sunlight, over a great cloddy tract; it is purchased for the collection. * * * What a hunt for Scripture painting is here—works presented to the churches by the Ville de Paris—and what admirable style of decoration adopted recently by a few; St. Germain des Prés and St. Vincent de Paul, beautiful and stately works by Flandrin in both, with the figures relieved, and the somewhat shady places compensated for by a gleaming gold ground. One day, as we went into the court of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, we met a group of all the members, who had been at a council to judge of the students' works for the 'prix de Rome.' The porter showed me the *back* of Paul de la Roche as he passed, a little behind the rest; so that I saw, as it were, all the artists without seeing one."

Of four pictures exhibited by Maclise in 1841, two were single figures of females, each contrasting widely with the other: one, called "An Irish Girl," who is occupied in "burning nuts" by a turf-fire—a famous charm in Ireland, by which young maidens test the constancy of their lovers; for accordingly as the nuts burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be. The other was a lady in the costume of a Hindoo, characterised by rich and powerful colouring. But that which attracted most notice—and it was one of the magnets of the exhibition—was "The Sleeping Beauty," a picture that would serve as a most suitable companion to the artist's "Chivalrous Vow of the Peacock." The fairy legend that suggested the subject appeared thus in the catalogue:—

"So the princess, having fallen into a deep sleep for a hundred years, was placed in the finest apartment in the palace, on a bed embroidered with gold and silver, &c.

"So the good fairy touched with her wand all that was in the palace—maids of honour,

* The picture referred to is Murillo's famous "Immaculate Conception," which Marshal Soult acquired when in command of the French army in Spain during the Peninsular War. He took it to Paris, and after his death it was sold by auction to the French Government for the sum of £23,440, and placed in the Louvre.—[ED.]

† This is scarcely just to our National Gallery, which, in proportion to the number of its contents, contained, even at the assumed date of Maclise's letter, more really fine pictures than the Louvre, or any other public collection on the Continent. However deficient it may be in quantity, there is no lack of quality. This opinion is, I know, that of many sound judges of Art who are fully acquainted with the great European Galleries.—[ED.]

gentlemen-ushers, grooms of the bed-chamber, lords-in-waiting, waiting-women, governesses, stewards, cooks, scullions, guards, porters, pages, and footmen, &c.

"Even little Bichon, the princess's favourite lap-dog, who lay on the bed by the side, all fell fast asleep, &c.

"At the expiration of a hundred years, the prince arrives.

"He approached the castle by a long avenue: he crossed a large courtyard paved with marble; he ascended the staircase, entered the guard-room, where the guards were snoring away most lustily; he passed through several rows of ladies and gentlemen, some sitting, some standing, but all asleep.

"At length he came to an apartment gilded all over with gold, and saw on a magnificent bed, the curtains of which were open all round, a princess more beautiful than anything he had ever beheld," &c. &c.

This picture, which, in a sense, may come under the denomination of "still life," possesses in a high degree the qualities of invention, imagination, combined with most effective arrangement, and greater delicacy of handling than we are accustomed to see in paintings by this artist. And it is absolutely wonderful what a variety of material he has introduced into the subject. From the "Beauty" sleeping on her richly-embroidered couch, to the small goblet held in the hand of the unconscious waiting-maid, every object is finished with the most consummate skill. The gorgeous array of the chamber positively glitters; it seems easy to count a thousand objects, each one of which is so elaborately wrought as to suggest the idea that the artist had made it his special work. The attitudes of the numerous sleepers are all perfectly natural, yet presented in infinite variety. It is, indeed, a triumph to have achieved a victory over obstacles that would have proved insurmountable in ordinary hands—such obstacles exist in the fact that all the characters in the composition are motionless, except the Prince, who draws aside the curtains to gaze on the face of the lady, and the group of angels watching around her bed. It might be said, and with some truth, that to show a multitude of figures in action is a far more difficult task than when they are in a kind of death-like repose; yet they scarcely appear so here, for each one seems still occupied in the business of the hour when the wand of the fairy touched him or her, and stopped for a time the pulse of life throughout the enchanted palace. At the sale, in 1860, of the collection of the late Mr. John Houldsworth, of Glasgow, "The Sleeping Beauty" was sold for £900.

The fourth picture exhibited by Maclise in 1841 was a scene from "The Vicar of Wakefield," "Hunt the Slipper at Neighbour Flamborough's—Unexpected Visit of the Fine Ladies:"—

"Michaelmas-eve happening on the next day, we were invited to burn nuts, and play tricks, at neighbour Flamborough's, &c.

"Last of all, they sat down to hunt the slipper, &c.

"It was in this manner that my eldest daughter was hemmed in and thumped about, all blowzed in spirits, and bawling for fair play with a voice that might deafen a ballad-singer,

when, confusion on confusion! who should enter the room but our two great acquaintances from town, Lady Blarney and Miss Caroline Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs, &c.

"Death! to be seen by ladies of such high breeding in such vulgar attitudes!"

A critic, writing of this picture at the time of its being exhibited, compared the appearance of the flaunting city-ladies among the pure maidens of the village with "Satan peering into Eden." Certainly, the painter has drawn a wonderful contrast between town and country, each representative being to the life: it is a humorous, capital work in every way, abounding with varied interest.

In 1842 Maclise exhibited "The Play Scene in *Hamlet*," undoubtedly the most popular of his works, and the one with which the public is best acquainted, from its presence in the National Gallery. In a letter to Mr. Forster, written, I presume, a few days before he sent it to the Academy, he says:—

"You saw two men come in here as you went out; one of them was a Mr. K——, a *nouveau riche*, who has lately begun to buzz about artists. He bought that large picture of ——. Well, sir, can you believe it? *that man knew nothing of the play of 'Hamlet,' neither did his pal.* I felt myself a very spoon even in explaining to them the plot and meaning of the picture; and my soul fell into my slippers to think that man is the representative of a thousand such. Oh! were you to see the puzzled, unintelligent look he used now to throw on me, and then on the picture, and then on his *pal*, who only looked at the tip of my nose. I swear to you he never took his eyes off me, and, I believe, never saw the picture at all. * * * I want to tell you that I have made Hamlet handsomer, and, I am sure, taken every vestige of —ism out of him. I have painted on it ever since, so you may make your mind easy on that."

And on the evening of the day on which the pictures were sent in, he again writes to his friend:—

"My troubles are over; my pictures have been carted to the annual show. Macready called to-day, and really seemed highly pleased. * * * He did not see the least shadow of a shade of resemblance to the —— Hamlet remaining. The whole of this day I devoted to entirely altering the character of the face, and I think I have succeeded in making it more up to the idea than it was heretofore."

It is scarcely necessary to remind the readers of Shakspere that the picture represents the piece of dumb show in the tragedy which Hamlet causes to be acted before his mother and her husband, the prince's uncle, who robbed him of a father and of the heritage of a crown. He has previously informed his friend Horatio—

"There is a play to-night before the King;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death.
I pray thee, when thou see'st that act on foot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul

Observe my uncle; if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's smithy. Give him heedful note,
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face."

The general conception of the picture, its grandeur of treatment, variety and truthfulness of character, appropriate value of what may be called the "stage properties," and its forcible delineation, render it worthy of the immortal poet. Look where we may, every inch of the canvas presents a purpose; nothing is the result of mere fancy, or of the necessity of filling a space. The reflections which appear in the treatment of the retiring figures are dealt with in a manner effective to a degree; in short, the painter has here illustrated Shakspere in a style that the great dramatist himself must have acknowledged with plaudits. There is no figure in the scene who, as well as ourselves, is not a breathless spectator of the murder—

"Murder most foul, as in the best it is,
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural;"

and we cannot separate ourselves from the common interest. But let us examine the principal characters as the painter has placed them on the canvas.

First, the Prince occupies the centre of the picture, and is placed, in accordance with his own wishes, at the feet of Ophelia: lying with apparent listlessness on the floor, he watches with intense earnestness the impression made by the actors on his uncle, whose remorse at the murder of his brother is most powerfully and expressively rendered: again, his mind, as once before, is filled with—

"Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing."

In the countenance of Hamlet there is just the character one intimately acquainted with the poet's conception expects to find,—a mingling of horror, abhorrence, and vengeance to be taken; yet, still, a

"Letting I dare not wait upon I would."

By the side of the King is seated the Queen, listening attentively to the actors, marking the opening out of the mysterious drama, conscious of her own innocence as a *particeps criminis*, yet not altogether without suspicion of some hidden meaning she is unable to fathom. Ophelia is to the right of Hamlet, and is a very elegant impersonation;—by the way, Maclise retouched and greatly improved this figure since the picture became the property of the nation. Some critics object to Ophelia

HAMLET.

as she is here represented, for the very reason considered by others as its chief merit —the expression of sympathy with Hamlet, rather than of love for him. Behind the chair in which Ophelia sits stands Horatio, who, being in the secret of the murder, from overhearing the colloquy of the Ghost with Hamlet, is also watching the effect of the play upon the King. The old man on the right of the royal pair is Polonius, the chamberlain; a cleverly-conceived representation of an aged courtier, who seems to have got almost into his dotage: all the rest of the figures in the foreground are attendants of the court. The crowd of armed men thronging the sides of the composition and in the background gives a grand and solemn effect to the whole; the character of these figures, and the manner in which the lighting of the groups is treated, are most masterly. Even in the scenic ornamentation there is an exuberance of fancy—almost too redundant, it seems, for the proposed space. This fact, from its being merely an accessory, escapes observation, unless closely examined; we find, however, in this, everything appropriate to the principal subject; on the left appear "The Temptation," and "The Expulsion from Eden;" on the right, "Cain and Abel offering Sacrifice," and "The Death of Abel;" all is the result of well-matured study.

But perhaps the finest portion of this grand picture, artistically considered, is the "play" acted in the background; if this portion of the canvas were cut out of its surroundings, and framed as a separate picture, it would be considered a gem of the highest value, so delicately is it painted: the conception almost reaches the sublime. How intrinsically poetical is the figure of the mimic murderer, seeking to shade his face from the yet lingering light of day; and the dim, gigantic form, his own outline reflected from behind: quietly and stealthily he has crept to the couch of the sleeping monarch, to "pour the lep'rous distilment in his ear." With such a vision before him, well may the fratricidal Claudius rush from the apartment, and, conscience-stricken, exclaim in his solitude—

> "O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
> It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
> A brother's murder! Pray can I not,
> Though inclination be as sharp as will;
> My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
> And, like a man to double business bound,
> I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
> And both neglect."

Another of Maclise's pictures exhibited with the "Hamlet" was "The Return of the Knight," a bold and spirited composition of two figures, fine in expression and feeling—the knight and his lady. The former has just come back, probably from the field of war, for he is yet in full panoply. His wife, who cannot wait the entrance of

squire or page to perform the duty, eagerly assists him to doff his armour; but the helmet is the first to be unbuckled, that she may give and receive the loving kiss. The canvas is small, but the picture is in every way most covetable.

There was also a third work exhibited in 1842, "The Origin of the Harp." As an Irishman, it would indeed have been singular if Maclise had not sometimes found subjects for his pencil among the numerous legends and fictions in which his native country is rich. In many of them there is so much of the poetical beauty and purity of sentiment a true artist delights in, that they offer an attractive field for his labours. Moore, the great lyric poet of Ireland, made pleasant and profitable use of these stories; one of his songs suggested to Maclise this picture. To render it intelligible to those who do not know, or may not remember, the "Irish Melody" bearing the same title as the painting, the following stanzas will be acceptable by way of explanation:—

"'Tis believed that this Harp, which I wake now for thee,
Was a siren of old who sung under the sea:
And who often at eve through the bright billow roved,
To meet, on the green shore, a youth whom she loved.

"But she loved him in vain, for he left her to weep,
And in tears, all the night, her gold ringlets to steep,
Till heaven looked with pity on true love so warm,
And changed to this soft Harp the sea-maiden's form.

"Still her bosom rose fair—still her cheek smiled the same,
While her sea-beauties gracefully curled round her frame;
And her hair, shedding tear-drops from all its bright rings,
Fell over her white arms to make the gold strings."

A more poetical illustration of a poetical idea was never embodied on canvas: the siren stands at the entrance of a sea-cave, whose drooping stalactites, radiant with colours glowing in the rays of the setting sun, form a kind of framework around her: behind is the deep blue sea, and above this the sky, of an azure still more intense, except where the sun illumines it. The attitude of the nymph is exceedingly graceful; with her hand resting on a perpendicular fragment of rock, and her long tresses falling over the arm, she presents the exact form of the ancient Irish harp; and one may almost realise the music of the ocean as the water ripples through the ideal strings into the cavern. The figure is decidedly statuesque in character, the limbs are well rounded, and the whole form is beautifully modelled. Her face is very agreeable, though not strictly handsome; and the coronal of sea-flowers and pearls wreathed in her dark hair adds, by its picturesque appearance, to the poetical character of the composition.

One word about the ancient Irish harp. The oldest in existence, or that which is

THE ORIGIN OF THE HARP.

assumed to be the oldest, is in the library of Trinity College, Dublin: it is supposed to be the harp of Brean Boiromh, King of Ireland, who was slain in battle with the Danes, in 1014, at Clontarf. His son Donagh, having murdered his brother Teize in 1023, was deposed by his nephew; he retired to Rome, carrying with him the crown, the harp, and the regalia belonging to his father, which he presented to the Pope, to obtain absolution. The pontiff, Adrian IV.—William Breakspear, the only Englishman that ever ascended the Papal throne—urged this gift as one of the principal titles to his claim to the kingdom, when he issued the bull transferring Ireland to Henry II. These objects were kept in the Vatican till the then Pope sent the harp to Henry VIII., and conferred upon him at the same time the title of "Defender of the Faith;" the crown, which was of pure gold, was retained at Rome. Henry presented the harp to the Earl of Clanricarde, in whose family it remained till the beginning of the eighteenth century, when it passed, by the gift of a lady of the De Burgh family, into that of MacMahon, of Clenagh, in the county Clare. On the death of MacMahon, it came into the possession of Commissioner MacNamara, of Limerick; and, in 1782, it was presented to the Right Hon. William Conyngham, who deposited it where it now remains.

Next in order of the pictures exhibited by Maclise was "The Actor's Reception of the Author," a scene from his favourite work of fiction, "Gil Blas," and sent to the Academy in 1843.

"Our page came, and said aloud to his mistress, 'Madam, a man in marvellous foul linen, bedazzled all over, and who, so please you, looks very much like a poet, wants to speak with you.'

"'Show him up,' answered Arsenia. 'Do not stir, gentlemen; it is but an author.' * * *

"He advanced into the room trembling and confused, and let his gloves and cloak fall, which, having taken up, he approached my mistress, and presented to her a paper with more respect than that of a counsellor when he delivers a petition to a judge, saying, 'Be so good, madam, as to accept of this part, which I take the liberty to offer.' She received it in a cold and disdainful manner, without even deigning to answer his compliments." — *Gil Blas*, chap. 11.

This is a gorgeous and spirited rehearsal of one of those scenes that occurred after Gil Blas had fallen among the players. The composition consists of numerous figures, some sitting, others standing—for the reception takes place while the company is at table. For finish, laborious and successful research, nice selection, and fit association of objects, and, above all, for expression, character, and imaginative power, this picture, in its class, can scarcely be equalled; for the painter has showed himself lavish of the wealth of a very rich imagination, and also of his powers to realise even the least significant points of his conceptions. The "author" enters, bowing very low, while the haughty and magnificent lady whom he addresses keeps her seat in

contemptuous silence; the attention of all present is fixed upon the speaker in a manner at once to explain his visit and to confirm the unity of the whole design. If there be a fault in this part of the picture, it is the evidence of power too much indulged; the expression is somewhat exaggerated, or, in other words, the contempt of the players is too obvious—it is not kept within what may be termed decent bounds. Maclise's works generally are, as it were, other words for luxuriant invention; especially when, as in the present instance, they lead to the exhibition of ladies, cavaliers, pages, and gay folk of all sorts, laughing, quaffing, coquetting, and making merry. The colouring of the picture is less brilliant than is usual with him; but it does not seem that he intended it should possess any such quality. The work must be estimated by its expression of character.

With the foregoing picture was exhibited "A Waterfall at St. Nighton's Keive, near Tintagel, Cornwall:" it is engraved here under the title of "The Nymph of the Waterfall," which seems more appropriate to the subject, though the landscape may have been sketched in the spot indicated by the first title. Maclise had visited the west of England with Mr. John Forster, and, I believe, Thackeray was of the party; this picture appears to have arisen out of that visit; and it shows how a mind stored with the rich associations of fiction, history, and chivalric romance is able successfully to descend to the simplicity of nature when occasion requires. There is no greater sign of true genius than this capacity for bringing down its own powers to the level of ordinary matters; or, it may perhaps rather be said, that the conceptions of genius elevate the common to the dignity of the lofty. The substance of the composition is a girl, bare-footed, crossing a brook, with a pitcher of elegant form on her head; she picks her way carefully over the damp, moss-covered stones, followed by a dog whose dripping coat suggests that he has had a plunge in the water. On the right is the cascade, falling in broken torrents from masses of rock which appear to enclose the water-bearer. Nothing can exceed the beauty of drawing and expression which characterises this figure; but unless it be a portrait thus romantically circumstanced, the costume is by no means in keeping with the employment of the maiden, or with the condition of life to which, apparently, she belongs. Her dress, arranged throughout to a nicety, and the figure itself, seem to belong to a girl of condition—in this case possibly rusticating for amusement. All the subordinate parts of the composition —the rushing stream, the stones, the rocks, &c.—are excellent in drawing and colour. Maclise gave this picture to his friend Charles Dickens: when the effects of the latter were sold after his death, it was bought by Mr. Forster for 610 guineas.

Before proceeding to notice the works exhibited in the following year, 1844, by the painter, it will vary my narrative to introduce, from Mr. O'Driscoll's "Memoir," a letter, or at least a portion of one, from Maclise to Mr. Forster. After sending in his contributions to the Academy, he paid a short visit to Paris, from which city he thus writes:—

D. MACLISE R.A. PINXt

F. BACON, SCULPt

THE NYMPH OF THE WATERFALL.

LONDON. VIRTUE & Cº

"I breakfast and dine, and do all that I have to do, from home. I am out from nine in the morning; I am choke-full up to my eyes in pictures; I never saw so much in all my life put together; it has taken me from ten in the morning till four in the afternoon, for three days together, constantly walking, to see the miles of canvas in Versailles. I have gone into all the churches hunting after dim old frescoes, and have found them rotting on dull and dank walls, and in dingy domes. I have had a perfect surfeit of Art, and have once or twice sworn to myself to give up all thoughts of it, and not commit the sin of adding one more picture to the embarrassing number with which the world is laden. My belief is that we in London are the smallest and most wretched set of snivellers that ever took pencil in hand; and I feel that I could not mention a single name with full confidence were I called upon to name one of our artists in comparison with one of theirs.* Most of the painters are in the country; nothing more easy than to have access to them. De la Roche is in Rome; H. Vernet is at his château; Schiffer† (*sic*) is out of town. I have seen Winterhalter in his studio, and Eugène L'Ami, both in high fashion. * * * D. Roberts is here, and I have gone with him to many of the sights. I have met with my very next-door neighbour in Russell Place—Ward.‡ Herbert § has been here, and M. Jain and his wife, Bell, the sculptor,‖ Townshend, &c.¶ I am about to start for Fontainebleau to-morrow; it is forty miles, but, I hear, is well worth the trouble. We went to the Fête of St. Cloud yesterday, and received splendid impressions of French character in every variety there; but I shall reserve all these things for your own private boredom. In the Ecole des Beaux Arts is the work of Paul de la Roche.** I cannot say a word—it is impossible for me even to convey to you my admiration of that splendid work. I go to see it every day almost, and the guardian who shows it welcomes me, and smiles at my enthusiastic admiration of it. I have given him so many fees for opening the door that he positively refuses now to take any more."

One of the pictures Maclise exhibited in that year (1844) was "Scene from *Comus* —Sabrina the Nymph releases the Lady from the Enchanted Chair." To the title was added the following quotation from the poem:—

"Brightest lady, look on me;
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops, that from my fountain pure,
I have kept with precious care."

* This is a very strong assertion to have made, and it must surely have been written on the spur of the moment, and without due thought. Maclise does not state what, in his view, constituted the superiority of French over English art; but he seems while in Paris to have forgotten that at this very time his Associates in the Royal Academy were painters who have obtained *some reputation* even in that country whose artists he so eulogises—such men as Callcott, Collins, Etty, Eastlake, Leslie, Sir E. Landseer, D. Roberts, Stanfield, Turner, Danby, Webster, Herbert, Creswick, Cope, Mulready, Sir F. Grant, and others. In their special departments it would be difficult to name French contemporaneous painters who might justly be put in comparison with, at least, some of these.

† Amy Scheffer, presumably.

‡ E. M. Ward; now a Royal Academician.

§ J. R. Herbert; now also a Royal Academician.

‖ John Bell; still living.

¶ H. J. Townshend; an artist of good repute, who died several years ago.

** The famous "Hemicycle."

I have no recollection of this picture, and must, therefore, borrow a description of it from a contemporary critic, who wrote:—"This is an example of vast fecundity of imagination, seconded by great power of hand: it is not, however, without its errors, and what these are is instantly felt by the spectator. We cannot estimate such subjects according to the qualities we demand in social scenes: had it been treated in this feeling, it would have been a marked failure. The observer, therefore, would exact something widely different, but without being able to describe his idea, and without knowing how far painting could follow it out. This picture may, therefore, be pronounced too 'sculpturesque,' and, perhaps, this may be termed an oversight of the artist: it will also be called brilliant, but cold. There is sufficient ground for such observations; and it seems to have been the care of the artist that it should be 'sculpturesque.' A close attention to the colour will show that the painter reverses the recipe for warm brilliancy; his principal figure is cold and bright, and the extremities of his group are light warm tones. But we have not space to observe at length on all the purposes of the work: the main object has been to make the picture like a scene of enchantment, or rather disenchantment, and he has succeeded by this very coldness: for had there been anything more of mortal warmth in it, the fact must of necessity have been impaired or lost. The design was intended for execution in fresco (it is one of the decorations of the Queen's summer house),* and shows the nymph in the act of sprinkling on the lady the drops which are to undo the charm. The background is the dark sky of night, and the entire scene is presided over by the dew-distilling stars. The character of many of the heads is beautiful to a degree. It is admirable in composition and grouping; and all the accessories are carefully studied. The chair is a model of ingenious design. In short, although not, perhaps, the best work of Maclise, it is unquestionably one of high genius."

Another notable picture of the same year is "Undine," from De la Motte Fouqué's exquisite romance bearing the same title. The canvas is of rather small dimensions, yet full of richly-diversified materials. The passage illustrated is that in which the young knight Huldbrand of Kingstotten conducts his beautiful bride, who is mounted on a gaily-caparisoned steed, through the forest, followed by the dreamy monk, Father Heilmann. The Spirit of the waters, Kühleborn, the uncle and guardian of Undine, having assumed the human form, watches their progress to protect them from "the mad-cap mimes of earth, and gnomes that haunt the woods." But the soul—which by marriage was accorded to Undine—had separated her from the beings with whom she had been associated by birth; she repels the advances, and declines the further guardian-

* At Buckingham Palace; where also are frescoes, from the same poem, by Sir C. L. Eastlake, Stanfield, Uwins, Leslie, Sir W. Ross, Sir E. Landseer, and Etty, all of whom received commissions from the Queen for these decorations.

D.MACLISE, R.A PINXT

C.W. SHARPE. SCULPT

UNDINE.

ship, of her uncle. In expressing his wrath he terrifies the lady, who shrieks and calls her husband to her aid. The knight springs to her side, draws his sword, and strikes at the head of Kühleborn. The sword flashes merely through a torrent, which, foaming from the hill-side, splashes among the group, while a voice is heard to exclaim:—"Brave knight, continue always to defend your beautiful little wife with the same courage."

The composition is entirely in the spirit of German poetry, and is treated in the spirit of German Art. The two principal figures and the horse are surrounded by a kind of framework—Lilliputian beings, entangled among the ferns and wood-plants, in an infinity of attitudes, but all their faces indicative of fear or surprise at the intrusion on their solitude; while Kühleborn, like an arch-fiend, casts the dark shadow of his presence over the strange fantastic scene, in hideous contrast to the singular beauty, both of nature and of the human and animal form, that prevails all around. There is some wonderful painting in all the details of the picture, which everywhere shows the most ingenious fancy and great inventive power.

In 1845 Maclise exhibited no pictures: he had employed much of his time during the early part of that year and the latter part of the preceding in preparing a series of designs illustrative of Moore's "Irish Melodies." They were published by Messrs. Longman and Co., in a volume of more than two hundred pages, each of which contains the letterpress engraved on the same plate as the design. To attempt even a brief description of these very beautiful compositions would occupy more space than could be given to them here, to do them even scant justice; and to write of them fully would almost necessitate a separate essay for each, so full of suggestion are all. In one of a few paragraphs with which Moore prefaces the volume, he says:—"I deem it most fortunate for this new edition that the rich imaginative powers of Mr. Maclise have been employed in its adornment; and that, to complete its national character, an Irish pencil has lent its aid to an Irish pen in rendering due homage and honour to our country's ancient harp." The poet and the artist must have an equal share in the merits which belong to their combined genius; for the "Melodies" would, in all probability, have remained unwedded to Art, but for Maclise; and the latter would never have added so bright a leaf to his chaplet, if the strains of the poet had not called it into existence. Examine whatever page you may throughout the book, the verse of the bard, be it inspiriting, as in "The Song of the Battle Eve," or melancholy, as in "The Legacy," is alike intense: to his touch his native harp has yielded its most moving sweetness; and faithfully, as by a shadow, is he followed unfalteringly by the painter, who summons forth, and disposes at his will, spirits that would have obeyed no other call. The famous "Lied der Nibelungen," of Germany, has been admirably illustrated; but, beautiful and even various as are these compositions, they fall far short of Maclise's designs in accuracy of drawing, in power, in knowledge of costume, and in exquisite feeling.

The proposal to decorate the new Houses of Parliament opened up a new field of operation for the pencil of Maclise; yet while in its results it added greatly to the reputation of the painter, it was the source of much disappointment: but more of this in its place. When the Royal Commissioners invited the artists of Great Britain to a kind of competitive exhibition of fresco-paintings in Westminster Hall, in 1844, Maclise contributed one entitled "The Knight," which might more appropriately have been called "Arming the Knight." It shows a figure standing erect in a suit of panoply, with the armourer by his side closing up the rivets: it may be assumed from the melancholy countenance of the fair lady near him, that he is going to the battle-field; she holds an embroidered scarf with which, doubtless, she will invest him, as a parting gift of love. The arrangement of the composition is good; and, although it seems somewhat overcharged with objects, everything keeps its proper place, and all are nicely balanced. As usual, the utmost care is everywhere apparent.

The success of this work resulted in a commission being given to the artist to prepare a cartoon of a subject, "The Spirit of Chivalry," which formed one of the numerous drawings of a similar character exhibited in Westminster Hall, in 1845. Two years afterwards he painted it on the walls of the House of Lords. The principal figure, personifying "The Spirit of Chivalry," is a female clothed in white, immediately surrounded by other figures—military, civil, and religious—who have attained the highest honours she has to bestow. She is elevated on an altar-like pedestal, holding in her hand a wreath of laurel; on her right, as if waiting her behests, stands a warrior, fully encased in armour, and having "his visored bascinet decorated with a coronet." A dignitary of the Church, wearing the mitre of an archbishop, represents Religion; he lays his hand on the altar, as if in the act of consecration. The figure of a statesman is the representative of Civil Government. Below these are other figures, among whom is seen a young aspirant devoted to chivalrous services, in a kneeling posture, and attended by his page. Around and near him are seen the Painter, Sculptor, and Man of Science; the Troubadour, the Palmer from the Holy Land, the Bard, the Poet, the Historian, &c. In all these there is ample room for the display of character; and the artist has made the most of it. In composition, drawing, and expression, the work merits the highest praise; and the refined intellect which lights up each countenance, from the most prominent to that which may be considered as the least so, is perfectly captivating. The subject is one peculiarly suited to the genius of Maclise; and it may be doubted whether any artist of our own day, whatever school or country might claim him as its own, could so appropriately and powerfully have illustrated the "Spirit of Chivalry."

The only picture Maclise exhibited at the Academy in 1846 was "Ordeal by Touch," suggested by a passage in Sir Walter Scott's "Fair Maid of Perth:"—"The belief that the corpse of a murdered person would bleed on the touch, or at the

approach of the murderer, was universal among the northern nations." The painter has, however, departed from a literal fulfilment of the text description, to represent the emotions excited at the proof of guilt shown by the flow of blood from the corpse. The trial was called that of *bier-right*, and was proposed to be demanded by the town-clerk for the discovery of the murderer of Oliver Proudfute, the bonnet-maker. "Let us demand," says the clerk, "from our Sovereign Lord King Robert—who, when the wicked do not interfere to prevent his good intentions, is as just and clement a prince as our annals can show in their long line—in the name of the Fair City and all the commons in Scotland, that he give us, after the fashion of our ancestors, the means of appealing to Heaven for light on this dark murder. We will demand the proof by *bier-right*, often granted in the days of our Sovereign's ancestors; approved of by bulls and decretals; and administered by the great Emperor Charlemagne, in France; by King Arthur, in Britain; and by Gregory the Great and the mighty Achaius, in this our land of Scotland." In the picture the murderer does not touch the body, but confesses his guilt from what happens to it. The scene may be supposed to lie within the High Church of St. John, in Perth. The body of the murdered man is enveloped, except the head and shoulders, in a white sheet, which would at once show any stain of blood. The officiating priest, a mitred abbot or bishop, is on the right, and near and behind him stands a crowd of persons all variously interested in the ceremony. On the immediate left, and near the body, are the widow and family of the murdered man. Also on the left are seated the judges; and knights are standing near encased in full suits of armour. All eyes are turned to two points—to the corpse, and to the man who would touch the body if he dared; but his approach has already caused a stream of blood to trickle from under the cloth. His head is turned away from the terrible scene and from the spectators; and although he seems to nerve himself up for the "ordeal," even to a pitch of agony, he is fixed to the spot; for the condemnatory evidence of guilt is already declared, even by the murderer's proximity. The muscles of his frame become knotted in a vain effort to maintain self-possession: he is wrung to his heart's core, and turns away horror-stricken when he sees the blood of his victim issuing forth to call down vengeance upon his guilty head. The only moving figure is the widow, who points fiercely to the fearful evidence, and denounces the assassin, to whom the attention of the majority of those present is mainly directed: this concentration of interest is, perhaps, the crowning excellence of the picture. The intense, breathless, soul-searching gaze of those men in armour, of those judicial figures, were "ordeal" enough for a heart of iron and a head of the most subtle mettle that ever mingled in the composition of humanity. It must be admitted, as what seems to tell against the effectiveness of the composition, that the figures jostle against each other, and assume some improprieties of place. This is accounted for by the love of the

painter for reflected lights, in the management of which he is excelled by no modern European artist; but it is at the cost to which allusion is made that they thus appear. The picture, which may certainly be classed among the greatest works of our school, is full of curious reminiscences: the heads of the judges refer the spectator to Holbein and other German masters of the period, while other portions advert to the modern school of the same country. The armour of the knights is of a later period than that of "ordeal by touch;" while the costume of the murderer is Gaulish or Saxon; had it been otherwise, it is probable his agonised expression would have been nearly lost.

In 1847 Maclise contributed three pictures to the exhibition of the Royal Academy; two of them were painted from the designs made for the edition of Moore's "Irish Melodies," of which I have already spoken. One illustrates the verse:—

"Her smile, when Beauty granted,
I hung with gaze enchanted;
Like him the sprite
Whom maids by night
Oft meet in glen that's haunted."

In this composition the "sprite" takes precedence, in importance, of all in his company. He is a courtly little gentleman, wears a three-cornered hat, and is perched upon a stone, from which elevated position he gracefully salutes two maidens, and in a manner indicating that he has a heart for each. The wonder of the simple girls is charmingly represented, for they bend over the manikin with eyes astonishingly wide-open. It is a whimsical reading of the verse, yet one in perfect consonance with its spirit, which is suited to anything but grave subjects. The finish of the picture is really exquisite: the red quilted petticoat of the near figure was never surpassed by Gerard Dow or Mieris; and the floral accessories—the foxglove, thistle, and bella-donna—are equally delicate in touch: in colour the whole work is unsurpassingly rich. The other subject is taken from the song:—

"Come, rest in this bosom, my own stricken deer;
Though the herd has fled from thee, thy home is still here," &c.

There is nothing in these lines to prescribe any particular treatment: the figures appear in what may be called mediæval costume; and in their relative dispositions the sentiment of the poetry is exquisitely maintained. The lady professes to love—

"Through joy and through torment, through glory and shame,"

and to this point the artist has most successfully worked up. In this, as in its

companion-picture, the draperies, &c., are painted with marvellous success. In 1857 it was sold, at the dispersion of the stock of Messrs. Lloyd, for the sum of 70 guineas. Both canvases are small.

The third, and by far the most important work of the year, is entitled "Noah's Sacrifice—the Ark resteth on Ararat—the Bow is behind the Cloud." This is a large picture, painted much after the manner of a fresco; and, therefore, found but comparatively little favour with the public, surrounded, as it was in the room, by canvases glowing with brilliant colours: no work, whatever may be its merits as a composition and its general treatment, as well as in feeling and other Art-qualities, will stand such a test in the estimation of the uninitiated and the ignorant. All the command of light and shadow peculiar to oil-painting, and all the resources of colour are, to an extent, laid aside, or made subservient to the spirit of the theme itself. The principle of execution is that which exercises an influence more or less dominant in the continental schools, and shows to a certain point an acquiescence with the severity and abnegation of some of the modern German painters. Yet it is a grand work, both in design and style of execution: it carries out literally the description of the event as given in the Book of Genesis. Noah is the principal figure; he stands looking upward, and resting his hand on the rude pile of stones raised as an altar; around him are the various members of his family; and behind them all is seen the ark on the summit of Ararat, with the animals, in pairs, issuing forth from it, and descending the mountain. The upper field of the composition is spanned by the bow in the clouds, the size of which, and its predominant colours, tend in no slight degree to destroy the general harmony of the picture; and yet it would scarcely have been possible to treat this accessory, if it may so be called, less prominently, without departing from the literal interpretation of the Mosaic writings. "Noah's Sacrifice" has been made widely known from Simmons's engraving of the subject. In 1861 it was in the possession of Mr. Gambart, and was then sold, with the remainder of his collection, realising only the ridiculously low sum of 205 guineas. It was said that the person who originally purchased it from the painter paid 600 guineas for it; not a guinea too much, if Art is to be valued according to the genius and labour bestowed upon the work.

The principal picture contributed by Maclise to the Academy exhibition of 1848 was "Chivalry of the Time of Henry VIII.—a Knight being armed by his Esquires for the Combat, bearing the two-edged Sword of the Period," a work of the utmost vigour and power. It shows the knight almost fully equipped; he stands erect, leaning on the formidable weapon described in the text, while an attendant stoops as if to fasten some portion of the lower equipment. On the left side of this figure is a lady, who appears to be lamenting the departure of her liege lord; an event that is evidently near at hand, as we see in the background the castle-court, wherein a

number of warriors are assembled ready to take the field. Though carrying the spectator's imagination to scenes of bloody warfare, the incident of the picture partakes in a great measure of the domestic character. Plate-armour has rarely, if ever, been painted so truthfully and exquisitely as by Maclise; we see this in every picture where such accoutrements of war are introduced; and in the panoply of this knight the artist has been most successful. The helmet is plain, without a *panache*, or plume, resembling one in the Meyrick collection; the breast-plate is ornamented in the raised manner that preceded engraved and embossed plates; and a marked feature of the time is a broad *solleret*, or pointed shoe, which protects the foot. The armour is crossed by drapery, a *cyclas*, or broad scarf; but this, as also the mail visible under it, is a chronological error, both being out of use before the time of Henry VIII. The picture exhibits all the display of exuberant fancy, and all the prodigality of accessories which characterise the compositions of this artist; and, if it be not an example of that chivalrous life that was "but one long lay of ladye-love," it represents the departure of a man apparently earnest in the work in which he is about to engage; "for every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood."

As bearing on this picture and on the "Noah's Sacrifice," I may quote here the remarks made by a writer in 1848, in discussing the question of fresco-painting. He says:—"Maclise is the only one of our painters of established reputation who could, without working under great disadvantage, immediately transfer his attention from oil to fresco-painting; and this from the fact that his style of execution has of late years been strictly a *fresco style*, if we may be allowed the expression. His present manner of colouring is calculated to give much more satisfaction in a work in fresco than in an oil-picture; for in the former we do not look for nor expect that richness and brilliancy of colour, or transparency and depth of light and shade, with which we are now quite familiarised in oil-pictures, and which, indeed, are the peculiar excellencies of our school. It is remarkable, however, that Maclise, even in his oil-pictures, has studiously discarded these peculiarly characteristic capabilities of the Art. But it is only lately that he has exhibited a decided disregard for them—a disregard sufficiently evidenced in the picture of 'Noah's Sacrifice,' exhibited in 1847; and in that of the 'Knight,' in this year's Exhibition. The former work, indeed, displayed scarcely a single pictorial quality beyond that of the representation of form. These peculiarities, however, do not prove Maclise's capacity to excel as a fresco-painter; they are simply defects which will interfere little, if at all, with his other qualifications for this branch of pictorial Art. He has to a high degree that definite and ready perception of form and character which is the especial requisite of fresco-painting; and with a somewhat greater attention to *colour*, he cannot fail to become a great fresco-painter

and a *capo-maestro* of our school.* That he is quite capable of a more truthful and generous style of colouring is sufficiently evident in many of his earlier works, to go no further back than his 'Hamlet,' now in the Vernon Gallery; and we recollect a picture called 'Snap-apple Night,' which left nothing to be desired either in colour or in *chiaroscuro*. Of late years, however, Maclise seems to have taken as much pains to shake off these excellencies as it must have given Sir Joshua Reynolds trouble to introduce them during the fifty years it ultimately cost him to identify them with the English School."

There is another picture of that same year, 1848, which must not be passed over: this is the portrait of his friend, Mr. John Forster, in the character of Kitely, in Ben Jonson's drama, *Every Man in his Humour*:—

> "*Dame Kitely.* Sweetheart, will you come in to breakfast?
> *Kitely.* Troth my head aches extremely of a sudden."

It is a small canvas, whereon the presumed Kitely appears seated, looking downwards, and in the expression of his countenance doing full justice to his aching head. The figure is dressed in blue, and is most solidly and substantially painted. On his right is the dame, in a reflected light, with features of much beauty. On the whole, it is a very remarkable picture, eminently distinguished by powerful and decided execution.

There is yet another work, or rather a series of works, exhibited in 1848, deserving of notice:—eight drawings in pencil, illustrating Shakspere's "Seven Ages," charming compositions, full of genuine poetic feeling, and exquisitely drawn. They were originally intended to ornament the border and centre of a plateau of porcelain; and, according to Mr. O'Driscoll, were made at the earnest request of some eminent persons interested in the development of the Art-manufactures of the country. For some unexplained reason, the object was not carried out, and the Council of the Art Union of London purchased them for £160, placed them in the hands of E. Goodall for engraving, and distributed the prints as a book among the subscribers to the Society. This was done, as reported at the time, without the sanction of the artist, who felt annoyed at his works being forced out of the course for which they were originally intended, and were more especially fitted than for outline-engravings.

Severe indisposition was one cause of Maclise's absence from the Academy in 1849. In a letter to Mr. Forster about this time, though Mr. O'Driscoll, in whose book it appears, appends no date to it, the artist says,—"I am really and truly unwell; it may be hypochondria, a return of my old ailment, but I am prohibited dining out. I did not tell you what I told him" (Mr. C. Dickens), "*that I fell down at the door of my painting-room*, and have had the most unquiet nights from palpitating fevers, and I am

* Abundant evidence has been given of this in the works he subsequently executed in this manner.—[ED.]

lowered to nothing. I look like the 'Banished Lord' by Sir Joshua, or Macready as Werner, from not having shaved during a fortnight. Here I am." The allusion is to a portrait of himself, as he is supposed to look, a rough but masterly sketch, apparently done with Indian ink, grotesque and humorous. "But I'm better now," he adds. In another letter to the same friend, almost immediately following the former in Mr. O'Driscoll's "Memoir," he has introduced another caricature-portrait of himself at work at his easel; his nose is bandaged up with a poultice; and he says,—"My whole nose is one red, fiery mass, arising from a fluid boil that has engendered on the very tip: I have had it a week, &c., &c. Fancy painting inspired pictures with your nose in a bag."

There was, however, another and very dissimilar reason for Maclise's non-appearance in the Academy in 1849; he was busily engaged on his "Spirit of Justice," a companion-fresco to his "Spirit of Chivalry," for the House of Lords: he had received a commission for the latter work soon after the completion of the former. "When we stand before his 'Spirit of Chivalry,'" remarks an anonymous writer of the date of the two works, "we feel that we mingle in a throng where every hand is ready for achievement—that we tread a ground whereon lies a gauntlet, and that the challenge is to all comers. But the 'Spirit of Justice' is subtle in its arguments and more mature in its style—it is a didactic allegory, in which we read of the darker passions of the soul, and the most exalted attributes of which it can conceive; and to this result we are made to ascend from much that is human to much that is divine. The paraphrase shows the Spirit of Justice supported by the Angel of Retribution on her left, and on her right by the Angel of Mercy—three figures at once determinable by the usual symbols. Below the Angel of Justice is a man accused of murder, in evidence of which his captor shows a knife yet reeking with the blood of his victim. On the opposite side are the widow and children of the murdered man, together with an executioner and officials. Besides these are two remarkable figures on the right; one a negro slave, and another who pleads for his liberation; a tribute of honour to the sustained exertions of this country to effect the suppression of the slave trade. The Spirit of Justice holds the scales, and the two angels are respectively distinguished by symbols. These figures all wear white robes, and although there is no more shade in the work than is necessary to give sufficient force to the composition, the light in the apartment is so low that a very small portion of this beautiful fresco is discoverable. The feeling, however, and the harmonious play of line which pervade it, are obvious, and every passage that can be distinctly seen is abundantly eloquent. The artist succeeds admirably as an exponent of the pure source of Justice, and the narrative would not have told so effectively in any other form than in that of mixed allegory. Justice and her primary ministers, the two angels, being associated with earthly beings, the story comes more immediately home to the spectator than if the

whole of the impersonations were ideal. With respect to colour, it appears that the artist has departed from a drawing in black and white only enough to constitute a coloured work; and the mechanical execution is equal to that of the most vaunted professors of fresco-painting."

To the exhibition of the Academy in 1850 Maclise contributed a *replica*, in oils, of this noble fresco, when the following description was appended to its title by the artist: "The figure of Justice occupies the centre of the design, and on either side are the angels of Mercy and Retribution. Immediately in front of the angels, on a level with the tribunal, are seated the Judges, lay and ecclesiastical. At the base, on the side of the Angel of Retribution, stand the guilty one, and the accuser who displays the evidence against him. Beneath the angel of Mercy are the widows and orphans, protected by their armed champion. In the front a negro kneels, newly liberated from bonds; and a free citizen, also bending before Justice, unrolls the charter of liberty." This does not materially differ from the reading of the composition, just quoted.

Of a character widely distinct from this is the picture he exhibited at the same time, "The Gross of Green Spectacles," from "The Vicar of Wakefield:"—

"'Here they are; a gross of green spectacles, with silver rims and shagreen cases.'—'A gross of green spectacles!' repeated my wife, in a faint voice, 'and you have parted with the colt, and brought us back nothing but a gross of green paltry spectacles.'—'Dear mother,' cried the boy, 'why won't you listen to reason? I had them a dead bargain, or I should not have bought them. The silver rims alone will sell for double the money.'—'A fig for the silver rims!' cried my wife, in a passion; 'I dare say they won't sell for above half the money at the rate of broken silver, five shillings an ounce.'—'You need be under no uneasiness,' cried I, 'about selling the rims, for they are not worth sixpence, for I perceive they are only copper washed over.'—'What,' cried my wife, 'not silver! the rims not silver!'—'No,' cried I, 'no more silver than your saucepan.'"

The consternation which Moses has created in the family of the good vicar by his unfortunate bartering of the colt for a portion of some hawker's stock-in-trade is inimitably rendered in this picture. The vicar deplores the bargain, but with the resignation of a Christian; the sisters regard the erring boy with reproachful looks; but Mrs. Primrose's wrath is not to be appeased. The appeal of the boy to "listen to reason" seems only to add fuel to the flame; she is implacable: while poor Moses stands aghast at the mischief he has ignorantly perpetrated, looking the very embodiment, both in expression and pose, of injured innocence. The scene lies in what country-people call the "keeping" or "living" room, which in those days was not uncommonly furnished with utensils of domestic use whose place is now in the kitchen. All these objects (and they are tolerably numerous) are painted with the utmost nicety, yet are made perfectly subservient to the more important parts of the composition.

The next important picture from the pencil of Maclise was "Caxton's Printing Office in the Almonry of Westminster," exhibited in 1851. It is a large composition, full of figures; for the designer, the illuminator, the wood-engraver, and the bookbinder all worked at their respective vocations in the office of the earliest English printer; combining, with the compositors and pressmen, to produce the first complete book published in England. All are here present on the canvas, with a company whose names are more or less illustrious in the annals of the time. Caxton, behind whom stands Wynkyn de Worde, is exhibiting to his patron, Edward IV., a proof-sheet of that famous production, "The Game of Chesse," which has just been "pulled;" near them are the Queen, Elizabeth Woodville, the royal daughter Elizabeth, afterwards the wife of Henry VII., and the young princes: this group occupies the centre of the composition. At a short distance from these are Edward's brothers, Richard and Clarence, the chivalrous Earl Rivers, Caxton's friend, and Esteney, Abbot of Westminster. Somewhat in the background on the right is the press, and behind it are compositors, pressmen, and a press-reader; on the extreme left appear wood-engravers, designers, binders, and others. In addition to all these are numerous figures, men-in-armour, and Court-officials in attendance on the King. The canvas is, indeed, crowded—almost too much so: not an inch of it but seems to give interest to the picture by serving some legitimate purpose. In this work, as in most others by him, Maclise seems to have been intolerant of vacancy. With respect to its execution, it is impossible to eulogise too highly its faultlessly accurate manner. The drawing and painting of the material are fastidiously careful; and the types, the press, the tools, &c., of the artist are so exquisitely realised that one is almost tempted to examine these before studying the qualities that distinguish the figures, in which there is, nevertheless, an impressive diversity of character. Each of the subordinates appears deeply interested in what passes between the King and the master-printer in the scene, so memorable in the history of English literature and civilisation, which, nearly four centuries ago, transpired in the old almonry of Westminster. The picture is the property of Mr. Forster, by whom it was lent for the International Exhibition of 1862.

In the letter of Maclise to Mr. Forster, to which allusion was just made, he speaks of himself as looking like Macready in the character of Werner. The idea probably led him to paint a portrait of his friend, the eminent tragedian, thus individualised: it is a small full-length, depicting Werner as he represents his own personal appearance:—

"Who would read in this form
The high soul of the son of a long line?
Who, in this garb, the heir of princely lands?
Who, in this sunken, sickly eye, the pride

Of rank and ancestry? In this worn cheek
And famine-hollow'd brow, the Lord of halls
Which daily feed a thousand vassals," &c.
Werner, Act i. sc. 1.

There is an almost total negation of colour in this portrait, yet is it a work of great power, and freely painted. It was exhibited at the Academy with the Caxton picture.

I have already referred to a picture by Maclise illustrating an incident in the life of Salvator Rosa: he painted another from the same source, but I can find no record of its ever having been exhibited. "Salvator Rosa and the Picture-Dealer" must have been a comparatively early work, for it was in the possession of the Earl of Chesterfield a quarter of a century ago: it is engraved as the frontispiece to this volume. Lady Morgan, in her "Life of Salvator Rosa," says that, in the earlier part of his career, the far greater number of his pictures were executed on primed paper, his limited means not permitting him to purchase canvas. These were sold to the Jew dealers, who kept stalls in the Strada della Carità, Naples. It is an interview with one of these questionable patrons of artists which Maclise has illustrated with a feeling and in a manner that differ entirely from the majority of his productions. It is a work of sterling merit, in which the principal figures are brought forward in a way that at once indicates the story. Excellent is that of the dealer, who, with his right hand over his eyes to "focus" the light, and his left pointing to some part of the composition, surveys the work with the air of a real connoisseur; yet evidently purposing to find some flaw in it, to lower the price demanded. The figure of the young Neapolitan artist is finely drawn, as he stands, cap in hand, yet with a kind of independent bearing, listening to the dealer's criticism, and quietly waiting his verdict. In the background is a female, who may be the Jew's wife, glancing at the picture while placing a casket among other objects in which the merchant deals. All these accessories, composing the usual contents of a connoisseur's bazaar, are put together with the happiest effect, and painted with the utmost attention to detail.

The year 1852 produced but one picture by Maclise, but it was a work that showed he had not been idle. "Alfred, the Saxon King, disguised as a Minstrel, in the Tent of Guthrum the Dane," is a large canvas, with a crowd of figures covering it. The subject was suggested by a passage in old Speed's "History of Great Britain:"—

"But this prince, the very mirrour of princes, more minding the wealth of his subjects than the majestie of state, disguised himself in the habit of a common minstrell, and in person repaired to the Danes' camp, who lay like Senacheribs, wallowing in wantonesse, and secure in their owne conceit from impeach of danger; which Alfred, a most skilfull musitian, and an excellent poet, did not a little egge on by his sweet musicke, and songs of their valour, so that he was suffered to pass uncontrolled into the company of their princes, at banquets or elsewhere, whereby he both saw their negligent securitie, and by diligent observances learned the designs that in their counsels they intended."

The first idea which occurred to my mind when I saw this picture in the Academy —and it equally suggested itself when looking at it for the second time, a year or two ago, in the rooms of Messrs. Christie and Co.—was the originality of the subject; the next, the originality of its treatment. The tent of the Danish chieftain fills a considerable space on the canvas; the canopy is embowered, as it were, in an atmosphere of sweet scents, arising from the most luxuriant floral offerings of the white May-bush and the horse-chestnut, whose leaves and flowers hang almost in dense masses over the tent as if they fain would hide from sight the *saturnalia* beneath them. Guthrum and a crowd of nobles and women reclining on couches within the circuit of the tent listen to the Saxon monarch, who sits outside playing on his harp, and looking round half contemptuously on a group of Danish soldiers almost insensible through intoxication. On the left is another group of stalwart semi-barbarians, playing at dice. Objection has been taken, and in all probability not without good reason, to the costume, armour, and weapons introduced, as being of a later period than that referred to in the historic narrative; but setting this aside—though it is important in the representation of any historical event—the design of the work is most masterly, and its general effect most striking. At the sale, in 1855, of the collection of Mr. Birch, of Birmingham, it realised 690 guineas; in 1870, when the pictures belonging to Mr. E. Bullock, of Handsworth, were dispersed, it sold for 530 guineas only.

I pass over the year 1853, an entirely unproductive one: the year following, however, brought a single picture to the Academy, "Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke, surnamed Strongbow (sometimes also called Earl of Chepstow, or of Strighul), receives the hand of the Princess Eva from her father, Dermot MacMurrogh, King of Leinster, in fulfilment of his Compact with that Lord, and with promise of Succession to his Throne." The artist thus describes his picture:—

"The marriage ceremony was solemnized on the battle-field, after the siege of the sacked and ruined city of Waterford; and it was in the midst of its scenes of desolation that the conqueror received the hand of the Princess Eva; at which time, as the chronicler relates—'The famous Strongbow did not celebrate his particular wedding-day, but the indissoluble knot of the Irish allegiance to the English Souveraignetie; with the same ring which circuled his wive's finger affiancing that island to this our country.'

"The picture represents the celebration of the marriage beneath the ruined porch of the church of the same period, and its round tower—the triumph of the invading Norman knights —the submission of the Irish chieftains—the mourning over the fallen—and the burial of the dead.

"The period was the vigil of St. Bartholomew, August 23, anno 1171, reign of Henry II."

To describe this picture in anything approaching adequate detail would occupy far more space than can be spared for it: its leading points can alone be adverted to. In

the central group, formed of the most important personages, is Strongbow in full warlike equipment, holding in his gauntleted hand that of his bride. Behind them, and filling the space that separates them, is the priest, who appears to be in the act of pronouncing a blessing on the wedded pair. Immediately in the rear of Eva is her father, Dermot, wearing his robes and regal crown; and on the same side is a company of bridesmaids, one of whom bears the train of the bride: behind this group is a body of armed knights, followers of Strongbow, among whom are Maurice Fitzgerald, Robert Fitzmaurice, with others. On the same side, and nearer the base of the picture, are the Irish commanders and soldiers—a portion of the garrison of Waterford laying down their arms in token of submission. On the left, and behind Strongbow, are officers and soldiers of his army. In the same part of the composition, and behind these, are men engaged in burying the dead, whose bodies are scattered over the foreground, mingled with the living wildly lamenting those who are slain. The background is an eminence on which stand the walls of Waterford, whence are removed the dead by throngs of the citizens, some of whom are also engaged in committing the bodies to the earth.

It will at once be seen by these brief remarks how much material is crowded into the picture. Passing over the anachronisms evidenced in the armour introduced, the personal characteristics demand some notice. Throughout the whole of the work there is intense and penetrating expression; calm self-possession on the part of the Earl of Pembroke, modesty and diffidence on that of Eva, who, by the way, is not represented so beautiful as history reports her to have been: the other ladies, her attendants, are not remarkable for delicate feminine features. Though the celebration of what is ordinarily a joyous ceremony, here is more of wailing and grief, for the marriage is a political necessity, not the union of two loving hearts, and it is consummated on the red battle-field, with the dead and dying around; here are the conquered but unsubdued Irish warriors laying down their arms in sorrow and in revengeful hatred, and wives and children lamenting the fate of their husbands and fathers. Seated among the dead and the mourning is a fine figure, that of a harper, too absorbed in sorrow to draw forth any melody from his harp. In effect the composition is divided into two parts: the upper, which is all light, has somewhat of a dreamy and visionary appearance, disuniting it from the more material action that is proceeding below; this upper section, moreover, comes too forward, the result of which is, that it seems to overpower the lower portion. Yet the defects are comparatively of minor importance, and "The Marriage of Strongbow" must take rank with the best productions of the modern British School of painting. It passed into the collection of the late Lord Northwick, and was sold, at the dispersion of his gallery in 1857, for the sum of 1,710 guineas, the purchaser being the late Mr. Flatou, who, I assume, must have sold it before his death, for I find no record of it in the catalogue

of his pictures which Messrs. Christie sold after his decease; neither have I been able to find out its present owner.

When the work was exhibited at the Academy, it was suggested in the *Art-Journal* that so fine a picture ought to have a place among the paintings in the Houses of Parliament, and overtures were made to the artist by the Royal Commissioners—not to purchase the picture itself, but—to reproduce it in fresco for a compartment in the Conference Hall at Westminster. In the report of the Commissioners for 1854 the matter is thus referred to:—"We further propose to commission Daniel Maclise, Esq., R.A., to paint in fresco, in the Painted Chamber or Conference Hall, 'The Marriage of Strongbow and Eva,' the subject being selected by us for that purpose. The design for the fresco so to be executed will be adopted, according to the requirements of fresco, from an oil-painting of the same subject, executed by that artist on his own account, and which he has treated with great ability."

Considerable correspondence on the subject took place between Maclise and Sir Charles L. Eastlake, Secretary of the Commission, the result of which was that the negotiations came to nothing. One ground of the artist's objection to undertake the work was understood to be the inadequacy of the payment offered, £1,500; but a much stronger reason in his mind was the position in which it was proposed to place the work: in one of his letters to Eastlake, dated May 2, 1854, he says:—"That, under any circumstances, I must decline to undertake the execution of the work, if it is to be placed on the *west* side of the Painted Chamber, as the light is wholly unsuited and insufficient for such a picture in that position."*

It was reported at the time that the Prince Consort, President of the Commission, did not approve of the sum offered for the fresco, and suggested that the artist was entitled to a much higher remuneration for a work of such magnitude; also that he was desirous the Commissioners should reopen negotiations in the hope that some arrangements might be made whereby the nation might possess the picture. Whether this were actually the case or not, the country has now only to regret that "Strongbow" is not among her Art-treasures open to the public.

Released from an engagement which, if fulfilled, might have kept Maclise during a lengthened period from again appearing at the Academy, he worked in his studio, contributing to the exhibition of 1855, "Orlando about to engage with Charles, the Duke's Wrestler," from *As You Like It*, of which an engaving is introduced here. The passage thus illustrated is this; but it will be seen that the conversation does not, in the drama, take place in the presence of the duke and his personal attendants; it is only by "pictorial license" that they are introduced by way of elucidating the text, and giving additional interest to it:—

* O'Driscoll's "Memoir."

D. MACLISE, R.A. PINX.

C. W. SHARPE. SCULPT

ORLANDO AND THE WRESTLER.

(AS YOU LIKE IT.)

"*Orlando.* I beseech you punish me not with your hard thoughts, wherein I confess me much guilty to deny so fair and excellent ladies anything. But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial, wherein if I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead that is willing to be so. I shall do myself no wrong, for I have none to lament me; the world no injury, for in it I have nothing; only in the world I fill up a place which may be better supplied when I have made it empty.

Rosalind. The little strength I have, I would it were with you.

Celia. And mine to eke out hers."

As You Like It, Act i. sc. 2.

The scene is a lawn before the duke's palace. The characters introduced, from the left to the right of the spectator, are Dennis (a servant), Oliver, Charles (the duke's wrestler), Le Beau (a courtier), Duke Frederick, Celia, Rosalind, Touchstone (a clown), Orlando, Adam, and, in the background, lords and attendants. Just before the contest commences, the two cousins, Celia and Rosalind, have tried to dissuade Orlando from engaging in the unequal contest with the powerful opponent before him, while the duke turns aside to disembarrass the parties in the conversation, which must have ceased ere we see, as here, the opponents standing face to face for the struggle.

No very great amount of observation is requisite to see that every prominent character introduced on the scene of action has been carefully and thoughtfully studied, not alone pictorially, but also with regard to the part each plays in the dramatic incident. In the stalwart wrestler we have the type, save in contour and expression of face, of the old Roman gladiator. A formidable opponent the fellow must prove of the slim and graceful Orlando, who stands watching him with clear eye and clasped hands, as if measuring the strength of his adversary; the latter evidently looks on him with supreme contempt, as Goliath did on the stripling David, and asks, "Where is this young gallant that is so desirous to lie with his mother earth?" By the side of Orlando sits Touchstone, the duke's jester, casting a sly glance at the two girls, one of whom, at least, he suspects shows unusual interest in the fate of Orlando: an inimitable impersonation is this wearer of the cap and the bells. The usurping duke is one who, in the matter of bone, sinew, and muscle, seems more fitted to enter the arena with the court-wrestler than the young and unknown son of his enemy, Sir Rowland de Bois, on whom his eyes are fixed as if in wonder at the daring of the you h, not unmixed with pity for the fate that seems to be in store for him. On his left are the two figures which give the picture all its sunshine, to speak metaphorically, not artistically. Rosalind and Celia are noble-looking maidens, sweet in facial expression, yet withal somewhat saddened; they are elegantly grouped together. The result of the contest is evidently no small matter of interest with both, though Rosalind may be specially concerned in the issue, as the story of the drama reveals before it closes.

Worthy of notice is the manner in which the entire scene is displayed; perfect balance is maintained throughout; each leading figure is in its proper place pictorially, and yet unity is preserved, while all are in action, so far as they reveal deep interest in what is taking place. The painter has given power to his work as much by skilful arrangement of light and shade as by his disposition of the figures and expression of character.

The picture was painted expressly for Mr. H. L. Betts, of Preston Hall, Maidstone, and was sold in 1868, with the rest of his small but valuable collection, for the sum of 580 guineas.

In June, 1855, Maclise was again in Paris, having been appointed a juror in the section of the Fine Arts at the International Exhibition. Writing from Naples to Mr. Forster at the end of July, he says:—

"The jury for Fine Arts had only two meetings, and the assembly was told by Count de Morny, its president, that it would not be required to meet again before October, and even another postponement might be necessary. All I did was to look out for notable works, and make certain annotations, and even little rapid sketches, serving better for me than long notes, to recall the pictures. Lord Elcho and myself went every day, for about a week, through the galleries in this way; he returned to England, and I went off the other way. This summary break-up of the jury left me sooner than I expected without occupation; and, having again made myself familiar with all the old sights and scenes of Paris, there was nothing left for me but to leave for Italy—a great deal too soon, as every person told me, and as I have since found to my dismay; for oh, the heat is beyond endurance. It is impossible to exaggerate its effects, and I feel at this moment that I cannot write to you of any topic but it."—*O'Driscoll's Memoir.*

Maclise was accompanied on this journey by his brother Joseph, and together they visited the galleries of Florence, Milan, Naples, Rome, and Munich; but it does not seem that he left any record of whatever opinions he formed of what he saw in these famous collections. Towards the close of the letter from which the above extract is taken, he intimates that he shall reserve anything he may have to "confess" to his friend on topics of Art till they meet.

In 1856 he made no appearance in the exhibition of the Academy; in the next year he contributed one painting which certainly may take rank with, at least, *some* of his best. The title was supplied by the following passages, explanatory of the subject:—

"Peter the Great, Czar of Muscovy, working as a shipwright, with his 'rough retinue,' in the dockyard of Deptford, during the winter of 1697-8, is visited by William the Third, in attendance on whom are Lords Carmarthen and Shrewsbury, his President of Council and Foreign Secretary.

"'He (the Czar) is mechanically turned, and seems designed by nature rather to be a ship carpenter than a great prince. This was his chief study and exercise while he stayed here.

He wrought much with his own hands, and made all about him work at the models of ships.' —*Bishop Burnet's History of Our Time.*

"Among those ordinarily 'about him,' while thus or otherwise occupied during his three months' stay in England, the memoir-writers of the time particularise as fellow-workmen in the dockyard, Menzikoff, Golownin, Galitzin, and Prince Siberski, the latter of whom was noted for his 'skill to rig a ship from top to bottom.' They are careful to mention, as hardly less familiar companions, a dwarf, a negro boy, a monkey (who, by excessive familiarity, caused some alarm to King William on one of his later visits to Deptford), and a young actress of Drury Lane.

"In St. Petersburg are still kept the coarse woollen stockings and sailor's coat in which he worked; and the Annual Register of 1769 preserves the testimony of an old man, a Deptford shipwright in those days, who remembered well hearing his father say, forty years before, that the Czar of Muscovy worked with his own hands as hard as any man in the yard."

Here, as in the majority of Maclise's compositions, is such a redundancy of material meeting the eye of the spectator that it takes no little time to become acquainted with all the personages and accessories introduced on the canvas. The Czar is seen in the act of sawing a piece of timber, that looks as if he were about to convert it into a rudder or stern-post, but he stops in his work to address the English monarch, who has placed himself in a somewhat formal attitude while receiving the Czar's salute. Two more opposite characters cannot well be imagined. Peter, as represented here, is a jovial and hilarious personage; but William is sedate in the extreme, in expression, dress, and demeanour. The attention of the whole Russian party is fixed upon their royal visitor with that happy persistence always evinced by the painter in indicating the points of his subject. Near Peter three of his distinguished companions are busily occupied; one of them handles an adze, but so awkwardly that it cannot well be determined whether he is aiming at the head of one of the bystanders or at some unseen block of wood. On the left are three women—one of them the actress referred to. On the right, behind William, are Lords Carmarthen and Shrewsbury; and in the centre, near the base of the picture, are the dwarf, the negro boy, and the monkey, with an endless diversity of tools and scientific instruments. Other accessories consist of bottles and glasses—a significant allusion to the habits in which the Czar is said to have indulged—and a variety of fruit: all these objects being painted with as much truth of nature as the figures which stand out life-like on the canvas. The picture shows somewhat more prominently than was the artist's wont his hardness of manner, added to an absence of harmonious colouring.

There was another contribution of Maclise to the exhibition of that year which won the good opinion of Art-critics to equal, if not greater, extent than the large painting. This was a series of outline drawings, forty-two in number, illustrating the story of the Norman Conquest. To give even a brief description of these most masterly compositions would extend this biographical notice of the artist far beyond

the limits I have allowed myself: it must suffice to say that nothing of a parallel kind within my range of observation surpasses this most interesting series for accuracy of costume, expressive character, grandeur of composition, and vigorous drawing. The reading and research that could suggest a set of subjects so strictly in accordance with historic authority must have been extensive. They were executed at irregular intervals during the leisure of the artist's evening hours. The series was purchased by Mr. Gambart, for the purpose, it is said, of having the whole engraved; but, for some cause or other, this was not done, and the Art-Union of London acquired from their owner the right to engrave them. The drawings were put into the hands of Mr. Gruner, who executed fac-similes of them, which were distributed by the Art-Union to their subscribers of 1866.

The next and only work exhibited by Maclise at the Academy was in 1859, when he sent a picture called "The Poet to his Wife," suggested by a verse in Moore's "Melodies:"—

> "Oh! could we do with this world of ours,
> As thou dost with thy garden bowers—
> Reject the weeds and keep the flowers—
> What a heaven on earth we'd make it."

This, I think, was painted, with some alterations perhaps, from one of the designs Maclise made for the illustrated edition of the "Melodies." The poet and his wife are young, and evidently they have not long been married: she is busy in arranging and trimming the plants which climb and blossom around an arbour, while he stands watching her, and philosophising in the words of the song. It is a work of much interest in sentiment, and is beautifully painted.

The interval between 1859 and 1866 was a blank at the Academy, so far as relates to pictures by Maclise: he was otherwise occupied during these years in matters which will be referred to presently. In 1866 he sent to the Academy a finished study, in oils, of the great fresco, "The Death of Nelson," or, as he called the picture, "Here Nelson fell," on which, with another, he had been engaged for so long a time. The following year he exhibited "Othello, Desdemona, Emilia," illustrating the lines—

> "*Des.* Why is your speech so faint? are you not well?
> *Oth.* I have a pain upon my forehead here—
> *Des.* Why that's with watching; 'twill away again:
> Let me but bind it hard, within this hour it will be well."
>
> *Othello*, Act iii. sc. 3.

Notwithstanding there is a strong tendency towards dramatic effect in the manner in which these figures are grouped on the canvas, and also a certain hardness of

colouring, this is a most attractive work. Desdemona's face excites unqualified admiration by its beauty, and the earnest anxiety expressed by her action is justified by the situation. At the same time appeared in the gallery "A Winter's Tale," the motto to which was—

> "In winter's tedious nights, sit by the fire
> With good old folks, and let them tell thee tales."
> *King Richard II.*, Act v. sc. 1.

These lines only suggest the subject; the characters speak for themselves. By the light of a blazing fire in the interior of a cottage, a story is being related to a number of rustic listeners—a ghost story, or a tale of horrors, it seems, by the almost thrilling interest manifested by the hearers.

In 1868 he also exhibited two pictures, of which the principal was "The Sleep of Duncan," a work undoubtedly of grand motive: it illustrates Lady Macbeth's soliloquy:—

> "The doors are open;
> And the surfeited grooms do mock their charge with snores:
> I have drugged their possets,
> That death and nature do contend about them,
> Whether they live or die.
> * * * * * * *
> Hark! I laid their daggers ready,
> He could not miss them.—*Had he not resembled*
> My father as he slept, I had done it."
> *Macbeth*, Act ii. sc. 2.

The interest of the spectator of the picture is absorbed by the figure of the sleeping King, which is very fine: by him stands the ambitious and murderous woman, watching her victim as the bird of prey watches his. The scene altogether is dark and mysterious—awful as a vision of one of Dante's poetic dreams of the infernal regions. Turning from this to Maclise's second picture of the year is like passing from the chamber of death into the realm of sunshine and joy. "Madeleine after Prayer" is a lovely impersonation derived from Keats's lines—

> ——"Her vespers done,
> Of all her wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
> Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
> Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
> Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
> Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees
> In fancy fair Saint Agnes in her bed,
> But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled."
> *The Eve of St. Agnes.*

The subject in the hands of some painters might have provoked a treatment akin to immodesty; Maclise's rendering is eminently delicate, while the girl, as she doffs her ornaments and rich costume, all exquisitely painted, is the embodiment of grace and innocence.

"When the 'Madeleine' appeared in 1868," writes Mr. O'Driscoll, "Mr. Wardell —an eminent merchant in Dublin, who had purchased 'The Spirit of Chivalry'"—(a small *replica* of the large fresco), "expressed a desire to possess it, and wrote to Maclise on the subject; but the picture had been already disposed of. Mr. Wardell then commissioned him to execute a work, leaving the subject and the price to himself." In reply the artist informed his correspondent that he was engaged on a work, which, in a subsequent letter to Mr. Wardell, he thus describes. Mr. O'Driscoll prints the note, but gives no date; but it was evidently written about the end of June, 1868, and runs thus:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—The picture I have on my easel is one I have long wished to paint—'King Caphetua—Caphetua—and the Beggar Maid'—see Old Ballad and Tennyson; but I choose to invent the scene, and figure to myself a young King, with a few retainers grouped about him, under a tent, and *he*, seeing *her* pass by, loves her—weds her (as I hope). It may be completed next year, for the first Exhibition, which we trust will take place in the New R.A., Burlington House, and our centenary of existence.

"I shall dally with it, and care not to paint anything else in this year; but you shall only take the picture—if, indeed, you think of it—on the express condition of your admiring it.

"I am living at Brighton, in charge of my sister and two nieces, for a month or so; but I grieve to say, in spite of sea and sunsets, my old habit leads me to shut out both, and convert 'an eligible drawing-room facing the sea' into an *atelier*.

"Believe me, truly yours,
"DANIEL MACLISE."

"Mr. Wardell," continues Mr. O'Driscoll, "purchased the picture, and it was transmitted to Dublin, with a note from Maclise, in which he says:—'I assure you that my satisfaction is complete in thinking that, amid all the agitations of disestablishment and disendowment, Ireland can still give heed to the claims of Art.'"

In due time it appeared at the Academy's new gallery, in the exhibition of 1869, with the title of "King Caphetua and the Beggar-maid;" the catalogue gave the following extracts explaining the subject:—

"When King Caphetua lov'd the beggar-maid."
Romeo and Juliet, Act ii. sc. 1.

"Is there not a ballad, boy, of the
King and the beggar?"
Love's Labour's Lost.

"There you may read, Caphetua,
Though long time fancie-fed,
Compellèd by the blinded boy
The beggar for to wed;
She that did lover's looks disdaine,
To do the same was good and faine;
Or else he would himself have slaine,
In storie, as we read.
* * * *
He saw her pass in modest grace,
Whiles in his tent he lay,
'Fill me a cup,' the king he sayde,
'She shall be queen, this beggar-mayde,
If she'll not say me nay.'"

Old Ballad.

It is a large canvas, covered with figures, all of which show the painter's exuberance of fancy and masterly drawing; the beggar-maid, as is fit, possessing a face of loveliness that would tempt to matrimony even a St. Anthony. On the other hand, the work is not free from that crude and hard manner which characterises many of his paintings.

There is but one more of Maclise's principal easel-pictures left to be noticed; the last on which he was engaged, "The Earls of Desmond and Ormond." It hung on the walls of the Academy in 1870, when the hand of the highly-gifted artist was cold in death. Its title was followed in the catalogue by a quotation:—

"Battles, as a matter of course, were fought to settle the litigated questions; which, however they may have carried defeat or victory, never brought conviction. It was in one of these that Desmond, being wounded and taken prisoner, was borne from the field by some of Ormond's men, who made a litter for the purpose, which they slung across their shoulders. 'Where now,' asked the victors, 'is the great Earl of Desmond?'—'In his proper place,' retorted this Geraldine, witty as he was wild, 'on the necks of the Butlers.'"

A composition this that might belong to the period it indicates, so thoroughly does it bring before the spectator the wild and lawless spirit of the time, with the characteristic individuality of those who took part in those sanguinary feuds. The litter whereon the Desmond chieftain lies is carried upon the brawny shoulders of his opponent's followers, while the Earl, half rising up to answer his querists, throws a half-savage yet triumphant glance on Ormond, who rides on horseback at his side. None who stood before the picture in the Academy—and the knowledge that it was Maclise's last work imparted to it unusual attraction—but must have regretted sincerely the loss of an artist who had so long awakened their feelings by the magic of his pencil. After his death, it was sold—with the sketches and unfinished works

remaining in his studio—for the sum of 500 guineas; Mr. M'Lean, the picture-dealer, being its purchaser.

Besides the pictures to which special reference has been made, as the principal works exhibited by Maclise, he painted many others that were never, so far as I can ascertain, shown to the public, but passed at once from the *atelier* of the artist to that of the purchaser. Among these is "The Ballad-Singer," here engraved, the property of Mr. John Mitchell, of Blackburn, in 1864, though he must have sold it soon afterwards, or the artist must have painted another picture of the same title; for in a sale of a collection, by Messrs. Christie, on March, 1865, *a* "Ballad-Singer," by Maclise, was bought by Maclise himself for 280 guineas. The name of the owner of the collection was not stated, but the probability is that this was Mr. Mitchell's picture. She is represented as a woman with a gipsy-kind of face, carrying a half-clad infant at her back, and on her right arm a basket of fruit with accompaniments, the meaning of which in connection with her professional avocation, if it be that of a wandering songstress, is not very clear. Still the apples afforded the painter an opportunity of putting in a few touches of brilliant colouring. She has entered the front garden of a wayside cottage, on whose enclosing palings a robin is perched, uniting his warble with the song of the woman, who is presumed to be serenading the inmates of the dwelling with a ballad, the words of which she holds in her hand. The principal figure is bold and free in design, and is richly coloured: exquisite in detail, and luxuriant in growth, are the masses of lilac flowers and foliage which form the chief background of the composition; bringing into relief the woman, whose costume and adornments, by the way, appear rather beyond one in her position of life.

Among other unexhibited pictures may be pointed out, "The Mock Duenna, Pereira's Studio," sold with the collection of Mr. John Smith, of Prince's Gate, in 1870, for 250 guineas, to Messrs. Agnew; "Scottish Lovers," sold in 1866 to a Mr. Smith for 400 guineas; "The Magic Deal," sold the same year, from the collection of the late Mr. Flatou, to Mr. Lewis for 140 guineas; "Ye Ladye Margaret's Page," 111 guineas; "The Spirit of Justice," 300 guineas; "The Spirit of Chivalry," 110 guineas; these belonged to Mr. Charles Birch, of Birmingham, and were sold in 1857: three years later the first of the three was re-sold for 100 guineas; "Ariadne," sold in 1858 for 140 guineas, and again, in the following year, for 118 guineas only; "The Bathers," from the collection of Mr. C. Morgan, of Clifton, sold in 1858 for 82 guineas; "Babes in the Wood," painted in 1856, and sold in 1857 for 250 guineas. There are many unexhibited works mentioned by Mr. O'Driscoll, not included in the above, and which his biographer copied from a list in Maclise's own handwriting; no dates are appended, so we have no clue to the time when they were executed: among these I may point out, "Page with a Letter," "The Wild Huntsman," "The Hypochondriac," "The Sleeping Page," "A Group of Indian Lovers," and another

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J. STEPHENSON, SCULPT

THE BALLAD SINGER.

LONDON, VIRTUE & Cº

group—both painted for Lady Blessington—"Pan and Dancing Fairies," "Combat of Two Knights," painted for Lord Lytton, "Sardanapalus and Myrrha," painted for the Marquis of Lansdowne, "Virgin and Child in a Niche," "Phœbe and Silvius," "Youth and Girl with Hawks," "Claude Sketching," "Maid Marian," "The Loving Cup," "Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn," "The Choice of Hercules," &c., &c.; to which may be added several portraits.

The prices realised by Maclise's pictures at public sales, of which I have instanced several examples, must be acknowledged to be remarkably low, not only with reference to the works of other artists, but with respect to their own unquestionable merit. One very probable reason is that the size of many of his canvases is so large as to preclude them from any collection which is not domiciled in a gallery of extensive dimensions. Yet this does not apply to pictures of cabinet-size, or even larger; and for these collectors have, as it appears, been disposed to pay only very disproportionate sums. There is a fashion in Art as in all else, and Maclise was not a fashionable painter; or, in other words, he did not paint to please the multitude, or to extort admiration by prettiness. But a time must come when his works will be more generally classed, as they now are by those who are competent to judge, as among the finest and greatest of their kind which the British School of the nineteenth century has produced.

There is yet another reason to which may be assigned the comparative unpopularity of the works of this artist: it is the want of general sympathy with the subjects of many of his pictures—such, for example, as "The Warrior's Cradle," of which an engraving is introduced here. If individual character influences the imagination of an artist so that it is seen through his works—and, undoubtedly, this is often the case—then Maclise must certainly have fallen upon evil days, living, as he did, and which we all do, in a generation which, for the most part, has no feeling in common with the times that, at least from an Art point of view, were so cherished by him; for how can an "age of industries" have any sympathetic association with an "age of chivalry?" The two, in all their essential qualities, are altogether opposed to each other; and the mind not attuned to a love of Art for its own sake—that is, for the excellence of the painter's work—finds in the foray or tournament of "belted knight," or in his more peaceful passage-at-arms with the maiden he wooes in leafy bower, little but that to which he is indifferent. There is, nevertheless, one ground whereon the past and the present may meet in harmony, for domestic affection is limited to no time, or locality, or class; and our forefathers who wore steel armour or leather jerkin, and their wives; and the men who now wear broad-cloth or fustian, according to their degree in the social scale, and their wives; may, in this trait of natural feeling, be placed in the same category. And thus the chivalric scene conjured up by Maclise in "The Warrior's Cradle" must find an echo in the hearts of the living.

It is a noble composition: grand in design, and most powerfully worked out. The

picture, I believe, is one of those never exhibited in public. The warrior, armed *cap-à-pie*, has entered his tent from the field of encampment, and, seated by his wife, who raises her hand to enjoin silence, watches his boy sleeping soundly in one of his father's breast-plates extemporised as a cradle—and a fitting one, too, for a warrior's child. A sturdy youngster he is, who, if life be spared, will certainly grow up to be a stalwart knight, a worthy scion of that majestic-looking couple; for the lady is a magnificent specimen of her sex, as her lord is of a soldier. The incident itself is highly poetic; and the accessories of the composition, even to the flowers peeping out of the armlet and strewed on the ground, aid materially the sentiment.

I have reserved to the last the consideration of Maclise's two greatest works, "The Meeting of Wellington and Blucher at Waterloo" and "The Death of Nelson," painted for the House of Parliament. The entire history of these frescoes, including the correspondence with the Royal Commissioners—even as it appears, in a condensed form, in Mr. O'Driscoll's "Memoir"—is far too voluminous for me to touch upon here; neither is it necessary I should do so. It must suffice to state that, after considerable negotiations, it was finally arranged that Maclise should execute the two pictures in question for £3,500 each: no very exorbitant sum for works measuring nearly *forty-seven* feet in length and more than *twelve* feet in height. This was in February, 1858, and he immediately commenced his task by preparing a large cartoon of the Waterloo subject. "The enormous space required for the picture," writes Mr. O'Driscoll, "compelled him to divide the work into compartments; and these were separately executed on the wall of his drawing-room at Russell Place. When all were finished they were skilfully joined together, and presented an unbroken surface, as the cartoon now appears.* His scrupulous accuracy in the most minute details is manifested in the work. All the uniforms of the leading generals were copied from coats, caps, and arms actually worn on the field on the day of the battle. His friend Sir Charles Eastlake afforded him great assistance in his researches." Mr. O'Driscoll quotes some interesting correspondence that this matter of costume gave rise to between the artist and those desirous of aiding him in the search after truthfulness.

The cartoon was completed in July, 1859, and gained unbounded admiration. Not the least gratifying, we may rest assured, was the tribute offered Maclise by a large body of artists and others interested in his success, which took the shape of a massive gold *porte-crayon*, accompanied by the following letter engrossed on vellum:—

"DANIEL MACLISE,—

"We send the accompanying trifle for your acceptance, not so much as a token of our esteem and admiration as of the honest pride which, as artists and fellow-countrymen, we

* At the sale of Maclise's works after his death, this cartoon was purchased for the Royal Academy, at the price of 300 guineas. It is now at Burlington House.

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J. FRANCK, SCULPT.

THE WARRIOR'S CRADLE.

LONDON, VIRTUE & Cº

feel in the success of the cartoon you have lately executed. We add our earnest wishes for your future welfare, hoping that you may enjoy health and happiness to complete the work you have commenced so well." *

This letter bore forty-three signatures, of which thirty were Members or Associates of the Academy.

The completion of the cartoon seemed, however, only to be the beginning of difficulties. After making several experiments on the wall of the Royal Gallery, where it was intended the picture should be painted, Maclise came to the conclusion that the colours reflected from the stained-glass windows in the apartment would greatly injure the effect of his work; and he actually wrote, in August, 1859, to Sir Charles Eastlake, secretary to the Royal Commissioners, resigning the task entrusted to him. In a subsequent letter he expresses a wish to execute it in oil-colours, and gives reasons for preferring this medium to fresco. The Prince Consort was, however, in favour of the latter, and wrote to Eastlake explaining how the difficulties might be overcome, especially by the removal of the objectionable windows, which, it was understood, he was endeavouring to effect when his almost sudden death arrested his efforts; and the "Commissioners turned a deaf ear to all the remonstrances of the artist." The Prince even came up to London from Osborne to see Maclise himself, to discuss the matter with him, and also to bring before his notice the method of water-glass-painting, or stereochromy, as it is scientifically termed, examples of which had been executed most successfully at Berlin and Munich. Out of this interview and subsequent proceedings Maclise determined to visit Berlin to see what had been done there, and to get information about the method; and he left London for the purpose without delay. The result of his journey appeared, theoretically, in an admirable report communicated to the Commissioners, and subsequently published: practically, in his resuming his labours on the fresco, by effacing what he had already painted, and commencing the whole again with the new process. The work was finally completed in the spring of 1862.

It is so well known that there is little need of any lengthened description. The Duke and his ally, the veteran Blucher, appear on horseback, with their hands grasping each other. The face of each is seen in profile: that of Wellington expressive of grief—he sorrowed for his brave companions-in-arms who had fallen on the hard-fought field; that of Blucher is exultant, for the victory had almost been won. Behind each are masses of troops, of every arm, serving to sustain the remembrance of the dreadful struggle not yet over. Conspicuous among the figures in the foreground is that of young Howard—immortalised by Byron in "Childe Harold"—being borne off to a soldier's grave: another, lying on the ground, is assumed to be the Marquis

* O'Driscoll's "Memoir."

of Anglesea, who lost his leg by a cannon-ball—one of the last that was fired by the enemy ere their final retreat. A third prominent figure is that of a wounded Highland piper, who sat on the ground "discoursing eloquent music" from his instrument till he fainted from loss of blood. Near Wellington are Lord Edward Somerset, who commanded the brigade of heavy cavalry; Sir Hussey Vivian, who led one of the light cavalry brigades; and Lord Sandys, with other surviving officers of the Duke's staff. Behind these are some of the second regiment of Life Guards, which suffered so severely in the famous cavalry charge, that, it is said, when the remnant was mustered towards the close of the battle, and an aide-de-camp rode up to inquire of Colonel Lygon where the regiment was, he pointed to a comparative handful of troopers, and said with deep emotion, "These are all." Behind Blucher stand Bulow, Gniesau, Zeithen, and numerous other distinguished Prussian officers; and yet further in the background is the band of a Prussian regiment playing their national anthem. The farm-house, *La Belle Alliance*, where this famous meeting is generally assumed to have taken place (though the matter has been disputed), is seen immediately behind the two commanders.

It is worthy of note how careful Maclise seems to have been to deal tenderly with the nation over whose armies we had gained such a signal victory. Throughout the whole of this vast composition there is nothing brought forward to wound unnecessarily the national pride of our foreign neighbours. This, as a critic has observed, is "a new trait in battle-painting." The dead and dying are almost equally represented by examples of both countries. Thus, where a fallen Englishman is seen, a dead Frenchman is his companion; and wherever the eye rests, there are cuirassiers, guardsmen, carabineers, Highlanders, and almost every description of troops in both armies. Another great feature is the entire absence of theatrical display, though the subject would tempt, almost naturally, such treatment. It is a solemn scene, presented to the spectator in a spirit of earnest sobriety; a memorial of a great and important victory, but without the flush of conquest and the exulting cry of the triumphant;—"at once the most faithful and the most modest of all the battle-subjects we have ever seen."

The victory of Trafalgar, though it cost England the sacrifice of her great naval hero, was a fitting subject to stand as a companion to the victory of Waterloo. Maclise had never shown himself as a sea-painter, yet the commission to produce such a picture was almost unreservedly entrusted to him. In 1862 he had executed and submitted to the authorities a study and an oil-painting of "The Death of Nelson;" and in February of the year following the Secretary to the Commissioners wrote to inform him that the design was approved, and that he "was at liberty to begin the wall-painting when it suited his convenience." It was completed by the commencement of 1865. Here, as in the companion-fresco, there is abundant evidence of great pains and

labour bestowed by the artist to obtain exactness in every object, even to the minutest. His biographer says:—"His sketch-book exhibits an example of the wonderful industry and accuracy with which he worked out all the details of the picture. Every portion of the ship, the calibre of the guns used in the action, their situation in the ship, and sketches of the guns' carriages, &c., were all separately made. He went to the Hospital at Greenwich and saw Lieutenant Pollard of the *Victory*, Drummond, the valet of Nelson," &c. The picture represents almost the entire length of the quarter-deck of the gallant admiral's flag-ship, but the chief interest is concentrated on the spot which soon and ever afterwards bore on a brass plate the inscription, "Here Nelson fell." He has just been struck down, but is raised by his friend Hardy, captain of the *Victory*, and some of the sailors. There is a mingled expression of suffering and fortitude in his features, though he knows that, to use his own words,—"They have done for me at last, Hardy! my backbone is shot through." Near him are Dr. Beattie, surgeon of the ship, who stoops to examine the wound, Captain Adair, Sergeant Secker, and others. A sailor, coming forward with a French flag, recognises the admiral's situation, and falls on his knees with unfeigned sorrow. A coloured seaman directs the attention of a marine to the mizzen-top of the *Redoubtable*, from the rigging of which ship the fatal bullet was fired. Another sailor points out the same to some young midshipmen, who at once level their muskets at the spot; one of them, Pollard, bringing down, it is believed, the rifleman who gave Nelson his death-wound. But the whole picture is full of incidents, distinct in themselves, yet each harmonising with the rest and producing unity of action and effect throughout. There is a fine poetic touch in the upper part of the composition which was well pointed out by a writer when the finished study, in oils, of the fresco was exhibited in the Academy in 1866:—"It was a happy thought, that opening in the clear blue sky above the head of the dying hero. The blanket of thick smoke is rolled away; the gates of the future, into which so many spirits are flying from their mortal tenements, are thrown open, and light illumines, as with hope, the face of the victor of Trafalgar." Though the fame of Maclise certainly will not rest entirely on these two mural paintings, they add immensely to it. Both subjects have, I believe, been for some time past in the hands of engravers, commissioned by the Art-Union of London to execute plates of them for the subscribers of the society. Maclise was paid £2,100 by the Art-Union for his oil-picture of the "Death of Nelson."

But the end was now approaching, though it was yet at a distance; and, as I have already shown, Maclise had painted and exhibited some pictures at the Academy since 1866. He had long felt the injustice done to him by the Royal Commissioners by their declining to carry out a scheme for the decoration of the gallery entrusted to him—a scheme that met their unqualified approval, and in pursuance of which he had executed, at their own request, three designs, in oil-colours, illustrating respec-

tively, "Queen Elizabeth at Tilbury Fort," "Admiral Blake at Tunis," and "Marlborough at Blenheim." For these he even did not receive any remuneration. Moreover, while, as it appears, other artists who had been at work for the Houses of Parliament had been paid over and above the sum stipulated, Maclise had nothing beyond what he had agreed for. In 1864 he writes to Mr. Forster, who exerted himself heartily to get justice done to his friend:—"I am annoyed that, inasmuch as I never made the slightest efforts for an increase of payment, and did not even claim the sums due to me, lest it should interfere with the sum available for other artists, yet I find I am not signalised in any way, and I feel myself included in a kind of rebuke in the last paragraph of the Report of the Commissioners, who 'desire to express their strong conviction that it is for the true interest and honour of artists, as well as due to public economy, that in future there shall be no subsequent departure from the provisions of any contract which has been deliberately agreed upon. It is for the artist, before he enters upon such an agreement, well to consider how far the renown which accompanies a successful work in a national monument or building, affords an adequate compensation for any pecuniary loss he may apprehend with regard to his private practice.'" There would be some reason in this argument if artists were entirely independent of their profession; then the "honour and glory" might afford some compensation for their labours. But when this is not the case, and it very rarely is, he should be paid, as far as could be estimated, just what he would have received for work done on his own account, so to speak.

The death of his elder sister, to whom he was much attached, occurred in 1865; and the event was a source of great grief to him. His own health, too, was at this period far from good, a naturally strong and sound constitution having suffered from his protracted work in the Houses of Parliament. For some years "he almost constantly lived in the 'gloomy hall,' as he termed it, in Westminster Palace, inhaling an atmosphere to some extent tainted with the poisonous pigments used in fresco-painting, and enduring the alternations of oppressive heat in summer and the fogs and damps of winter. He was accustomed to leave his home at Chelsea every morning about ten o'clock, and remain in the Royal Gallery until the fading daylight brought him a short respite from his labours." And notwithstanding his cause with regard to the treatment he experienced from the Royal Commissioners was taken up by several influential journals and newspapers, they failed in procuring for him that justice to which he was entitled. This result was well calculated to depress his spirits and injure his health.

In 1865 Sir Charles Eastlake, President of the Academy, died. An offer was made to Sir Edwin Landseer to supply the vacancy: on his declining, Maclise was requested to fill the chair, but his habits and disposition were too retiring to induce him to accept the honour, and Mr. Grant, now Sir Francis Grant, succeeded to the presidentship.

"His health was still delicate," says Mr. O'Driscoll, referring to the early part of 1870; "he could no longer enjoy his accustomed exercise; the slightest exertion was followed by extreme languor and weariness. He was suffering from a slight cough; but as this recurred regularly every winter from the period when he was first engaged on the wall-paintings at Westminster, and again disappeared in the month of April, it did not, previously, excite much alarm. His habits became even more solitary and sedentary than before, and this year the cough did not yield to the influence of returning spring. The favourite occupation of the artist was to sit at the window of his house in Cheyne Walk, with his pencil and sketch-book." On the 6th of April, though languid and depressed, he attended the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race. A few days afterwards he was seized with an attack of acute pneumonia, and though the most skilful medical advice was at once resorted to, it failed to arrest the progress of the disorder, and on the 26th of the month the earthly career of Maclise terminated. He was buried in the cemetery at Kensal Green, in the vault containing the remains of his father, mother, brother, and sister. The day of the funeral chanced to be that on which the annual banquet of the Academy was fixed to take place, and the arrangements could not be postponed; but for this the members of the society would in a body have attended the obsequies. As it was, several of them did, with many of the deceased painter's friends.

The event naturally shed a dark cloud over the members of the Academy and their guests when they met in the great banquet-hall the same evening, where hung, with many of the finest pictures of the year's exhibition, Maclise's last work, "The Earls of Desmond and Ormond." His death was referred to by more than one speaker at the festal table; but the eloquent tribute to his memory there paid by Charles Dickens deserves to be recorded wherever mention is made of the artist and his works. After alluding to the long term of intimacy and constant companionship existing between them, he thus concluded—"Of his genius in his chosen art I will venture to say nothing here; but of his prodigious fertility of mind and wonderful wealth of intellect, I may confidently assert that they would have made him, if he had been so minded, at least as great a writer as he was a painter. The gentlest and most modest of men, the freest as to his generous appreciation of young aspirants, and the frankest and largest-hearted as to his peers, incapable of a sordid or ignoble thought, gallantly sustaining the true dignity of his vocation, without one grain of self-assertion, wholesomely natural at the last as at the first, 'in wit a man, in simplicity a child;' no artist, of whatsoever denomination, I make bold to say, ever went to his rest with a truer chivalry to the Art-goddess whom he worshipped." In less than two months from the utterance of these words, the speaker of them also "rested from his labours."

Whatever difference of opinion—and that there is such cannot be denied—may

prevail on the special qualities of Maclise's pictures, it is certain that by his death we lost one of our most original artists, and one who was as great in many respects as he was original. In design and drawing but few, if any, of our school will bear comparison with him. A rich faculty of invention, combined with great power, marks almost every work that proceeded from his hand; and yet this vigour of conception, and a wonderful boldness of handling, were united with the utmost attention to detail, even to pre-Raffaelism. It is said he was no colourist, and in one sense this may be true; still, his pictures are brilliant with colour, though often deficient in that harmony which satisfies a critical eye: hence a certain harshness far from agreeable, and a want of that repose which, even amid a blaze of splendour, is not beyond the reach of the painter's art. Vigour of composition and force of realisation were evidently his aim, and in working up to these results he appears to have cared little for aught else: but whether his canvas showed only a single figure, or was crowded with stirring incident, it developed the mind and the hand of a master of Art.

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